

Real Life Stories

Trucker's Edition

1

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Real People
in
Real Places
with
Real Problems
Looking for a
Real Answer

*People so Real that it could
be someone you know.*

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CHAPTER 1

This One's for You!

We had been having trouble with our marriage.

I told my wife to just leave. I'd had enough.

I was sitting on top of 46,000 lbs. of explosives.

I had visions of a big bolt of lightning shooting down from the sky.

Tears started running down my face.

The feeling that came over me was indescribable.

It was August 1995, but I remember it like it was yesterday. My wife Linda was going to this little country church. We had been having trouble with our marriage, so I decided it might help if I was to start going to church with her. I had been going a few months and listening to the preacher, but it seemed like every week that preacher was standing up there talking about me. So I did what a lot of people do. I quit going. I didn't need that every week.

After I quit going, things got worse. We were arguing, and I told my wife to just leave. I'd had enough. Well, she did. She went to her pastor's house, and it wasn't long before he was calling me. He asked if he could come to my house and talk to me. I really didn't want to hear what he had to say, but I really did like the guy. So I told him I guess he could. It didn't take him long to get there, and when he showed up he had a little book with him called eternal life. He ask me if he could read the book to me. I didn't want to hear it, but I didn't want to be rude so I said, "Sure, go ahead." He opened that little book and started reading. As he was reading, I was looking at the TV, the ceiling, the walls, anywhere to keep from looking at that little book. Being the good servant of God that he was, he just kept on reading. When he came to the end of the book there was a prayer at the end. He read that little prayer to me and asked me if I would like to pray and ask Jesus in to my life. He said Jesus would give me this eternal life if I would just confess my sins to Jesus with my mouth and believe with my heart. I told him that I didn't think I was quite ready for that.

He said that was fine and maybe I needed to think about it. Then, he left.

I went on to bed because I had to get up at 3am to make a run to northern Illinois the next day. The next morning I was up by 3 and on the road by 4 headed to Galena, Illinois. I'd been driving about an hour when the tears started pouring out of my eyes. I remember I couldn't stop crying, and I started talking to God. I said, "God, if there even is a God. I'm not sure if I even believe in God, but if you're real I need you to show me a sign. I need a sign from God." Well as I drove on the tears finally stopped. About daylight, I was driving up I-55 when I looked out in the field and there was this little blue sign that looked like it had been out there forever. As I looked at that old weather cracked sign, I read CHRIST IS THE ANSWER. When I read those words I thought, "That's a sign, that's a sign from God!"

Then I heard this voice inside my head saying, "That's not a sign from God. That old worn out sign has been there forever." Besides, when I asked for a sign from God, that's not what I meant. I didn't mean I wanted a sign. I meant I wanted something big something from God. So I started talking to God again, and I told God that wasn't good enough, that wasn't what I meant. I needed something else, something from God. So I wiped away my tears and drove on. I remember driving along and talking to God, and by this time I was on I-74 between Peoria and Galesburg, this little white van pulled up beside me. I looked down at this woman in the van. She looked up at me with a funny look on her face, rolled down her window, stuck her arm out the window, and pointed her thumb to the sky. I thought, "What is she doing? What's that supposed to mean?" Then, as the van went on by, I read on the back of the van it was a church van. When I read those words the first thought that came to my mind was that it was a sign from God.

Then I said, "No, God. That's not good enough either. That's not it. That's not what I wanted." I wanted something big, something that would leave no doubt that it was from God. I drove on with lots to think about, expecting at any moment something big would happen.

I made it to my destination a little past noon. I started unloading my

bulk tanker of explosives. As I was unloading, sitting on top of 46,000 lbs. of explosives, I started talking to God again. I told God that I was still waiting for something big. I don't really know what I was looking for, but I would know it when I saw it. I had visions of a big bolt of lightning shooting down from the sky. When you're sitting on 23 tons of dynamite a bolt of lightning is the last thing you want to see, but I was ready and waiting. Well, nothing happened. I finished unloading and left. As I headed east toward Rockford on U.S. 20, I started talking to God again. I remember saying, "God I'm still waiting for my sign, for something big." I hit Rockford and headed south on I-39. About an hour later I looked to my left, and out in the field was a great big sign. On this sign was the face of Jesus and the words THIS ONE'S FOR YOU! As I looked into the eyes of Jesus and read those words, cold chills started running up and down my spine. Tears started running down my face. I started confessing my sins and trying to remember the prayer that was in the little book that Russ, my wife's pastor, had read to me. I prayed that prayer the best I could remember it. I prayed a whole lot more just in case that wasn't enough. The feeling that came over me was indescribable, but it was like I was floating the rest of the way home. Jesus had lifted all my burdens that day. I couldn't wait to get home, tell my wife, and call Russ who now is my pastor and best friend. The next day the sky was bluer and the grass was greener. Everything had changed! My and Linda's marriage gets better each and every day. The problems of everyday life are still there, but I don't have to face them alone. Jesus is always there with me.

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CHAPTER 2

Coast to Coast

I thought I could run from my troubles and from myself.

My parents were trying to make up their mind on having me committed to an asylum.

I was back on drugs.

I ran the wheels off my truck, averaging over six thousand miles per week.

I did not have the desire to live.

I slipped the pistol under my chin...

I was a young backslidden preacher that was overworked and stressed to the limit. This caused me to suffer a partial nervous breakdown, which lasted seven years. It was in the early 80's that I had left home and secured a job running coast to coast, as I thought I could run from my troubles and from myself. My parents were trying to make up their mind on having me committed to an asylum for treatment, but I was not going to stick around and wait.

It was time for me to go, and soon I was back on drugs and going back toward the world. I bought all new clothes, which looked like something out of a young guns movie, and hit the western trail. I didn't make contact with my family for over a year. I ran the wheels off my truck, averaging over six thousand miles per week. I decided I did not have the desire to live and tried on three different occasions to end my life.

I had guns all over my truck, as I had earlier worked with the Sherriff's Department in my home county. I am unable to recall the first few times I attempted to take my life, but I will never forget the third. I was in Carlisle, Pennsylvania near the Association of Christian Truckers Chapel. It was raining. As the morning sun began to swallow up the darkness, I slipped out of my truck with one of my guns. I stood behind the cab of my truck. As I slipped the pistol under my chin, I thought nobody would see me and nobody would even care. I am

unable to remember much except that someone stopped me, pointed at the chapel, and said, "That is where you need to be." I don't know who they were or where they went, but it got me thinking that maybe I could put it off and go to the chapel.

I recall as if it was yesterday, that beautiful red head meeting me as I opened the door. She instantly recognized that something was wrong with me and began speaking what I needed to hear. I was one messed up individual that had grown tired of the church scene with preachers not practicing what they were preaching behind the blessed desk. I just could not understand how they could be one way toward their family and another way in church, with no remorse or conscience.

The lady chaplain walked over to where I was sitting and stared in my face with a smile that caused me to forget why I was even there. I was taken back as I looked at her red dress and white boots. Suddenly, she began speaking on how people in clergy sometimes get caught up in the flesh. This got my attention. I remember she began to expound on how people could claim to be godly but end up being dragged down by the flesh. She said sometimes people do these things because the flesh likes to do what it knows how to do. I started to cry and told her what I had just attempted to do behind my truck. It was then that I saw her husband start crying with me. She prayed with me. I later learned that her name was Kris, and her husband's name was Joe. He was a retired high ranking officer in the US Navy. These two precious people were used of God to make an influential impact on my life.

It was in the early 90's that I was on Interstate 80 and passing through Milton, Pennsylvania. I heard a voice I had come to know so well. It was Chaplain Kris on the CB inviting drivers to chapel service. I thought, "After all these years could this really be her?" I made a point to pass that route again, and sure enough there was that voice calling me home. I stopped in, and she instantly recognized me and said, "The Lord says you are preaching tonight." I smiled and said, "Chaplain Kris, the Lord has cleared up my nerves and placed me back into his ministry, but I have not attempted to speak. She said, "I knew it, and you are preaching tonight!"

I remember preaching the message about the woman at the well and

calling it God's Flower Garden. I did not know it, but she had recorded the message that night and gave me a copy. The Lord opened the door for me in several radio stations and started performing miracles when I would preach. Several tape ministries reproduced and distributed the message from that chapel service on God's Flower Garden. It traveled the world with hundreds of stories coming in of changed lives and healings. I would often stop by The Little Grace Chapel in Milton, Pennsylvania and preach. There were services every night at 7:30 and 10:30, and the place was usually full. The Lord even had my runs set up until I could do a week revival there with many lives changed for the Glory of God. We have witnessed God bring them in by the hundreds as we sang and played our guitars over the speakers in outside services.

There were drivers young and old dancing in the parking lot giving praise to the Lord as we had revival in the parking lot by the fuel isle. Many times, God would use me to give a word of wisdom and knowledge that would stop drivers from attempting to take their life with stories like mine. Some had left their truck, coming to our meeting, looking for a reason to live. Just like Kris had the words for me, God had the words for them. Just like me, some later made it into the Lord's ministry.

I could go on and on, but now you know why I have devoted my whole life to working in God's ministry and allowing Him to leave His signature through me to other generations. I became a recognized chaplain with the Association of Christian Truckers and was blessed to minister at the Road Angel on several occasions in Illinois.

My thanks to the Mobil Truck Stop Ministry for being there for me when I was looking for a reason to live! God has used my ministries, Withered Hand Ministries, Inc. and Withered Hand Ministries International, to reach around the world with hundreds of testimonies of changed lives, miracles, and healings. The Lord has blessed me to write inspirational books, which can be found in many cities in the USA and many countries throughout the free world.

Yes, dear friend, I can say with confidence that when God gives out His rewards, those that paved the way for the Mobil Chapel Ministry

to the drivers and motoring public, they will not lack for rewards. Be blessed.

Jerry

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The Truth

The people you have just read about had to come to a place of knowing, understanding, and accepting the truth before their lives could be changed.

As you read through these “Truths” in the pages ahead, take time to think about your life. These truths, when received, invite you into a loving relationship with God that will bring you peace, joy, and personal transformation to discover and fulfill your life’s purpose and destiny.

Throughout the rest of this book, in between the many more “Real Life Stories,” we will share some of these truths with you.

CHAPTER 3

My Childhood Was Dysfunctional

Mom was using marijuana. I started stealing it.

I sold drugs on the side.

Some guys came, kicked in my door, duct taped and pistol whipped me, and took \$30,000.

I started smoking crack, and I could not stop.

I ended up in and out of rehab multiple times.

At the age of 43, I went to jail for the first time.

My childhood was dysfunctional. When I was a year old, my parents broke up. We moved around a lot. My mom remarried to a man I adored and then divorced. I never saw him again.

Mom married again, and her third husband used to beat me. He beat my dog and sent him to the pound. When my friends came over, he would do something to make it unenjoyable, and they would never come back.

Every week, we went to church. We went to bible study on Wednesdays and Sunday school. My mom's third husband was the pastor. My sister was born, and I took care of her as a baby. She loved me, and it felt like she was the only thing I had.

My Mom was using marijuana. I started stealing it from her when I was 11. I was outside one day, and some high school guys were trying to roll a joint, so I stepped in and rolled it. They were impressed. I took more weed, and they taught me how to sell it. I always had money in my pocket. I would go to school loaded, looking for attention from friends.

When I was in 7th grade, my step-brother came and spent the night. I

got up early to make breakfast and was watching TV. My step dad asked if I had made anything for his son. I said no because he was still asleep, and I got one of the worst beatings ever. My step-brother told my grandparents, and they took me in. They were well off financially and showered me with gifts. I had everything a child would want. I played sports and got good grades all thru high school. I was friendly and had a lot of friends.

When I turned 18, I left and never went back. I had another side to me and wanted to prove I wasn't a rich kid. I started selling drugs. I went through college drinking and partying. Then, a terrible thing happened. M granddad found he had prostate cancer. I left school to come home and be by his side. I started driving delivery trucks. I worked good jobs and sold drugs on the side. Eventually, I stopped selling drugs. Some guys came, kicked in my door, duct taped and pistol whipped me, and took \$30,000.

I decided to become a DJ. I had the lights and big speakers, and I was busy every weekend. I started taking trips out of town. I got another job, I got close to a girl that ran a bar, and I DJ'd every weekend. I was introduced to cocaine. I tried it and loved it. One night, I was with a girl and had my phone turned off. When I woke up, I had a bunch of messages. My granddaddy had died.

I started smoking crack, and I could not stop. When I was 37, I met a woman and ended up getting her pregnant. I quit smoking until a year later when we broke up. I ended up in and out of rehab multiple times. I could never get it together. I'd stay sober for a year then be right back at it.

At the age of 43, I went to jail for the first time on a Paraphernalia charge. I went to court and received a fine, but I didn't pay it. I took grandma's car, and I was gone for a week. She called the police. I drove the car to the jail, said I had an outstanding fine and warrant, and asked them to please take me and put me in rehab. They wanted to let me out the next day, but I begged them to let me stay. I was put in the program for 30 days, and I told my lawyer to make it so that I stayed for 60 days. I started writing and had to write a poem for graduation. I was asked to recite my poem. I did well for about a year. I was

performing poetry, and people were asking me to come speak. The jail even had me come back and speak.

One day, I hurt my back. My mom gave me a pain pill, dilaudid. I started itching, feeling down, and nodding out. I took the car, got high on crack, and was gone for a week. I went to jail again.

Two weeks later, my mom had a heart attack and died. I went on a binge.

I ended up going into an outpatient program for a year and moved to South Carolina. Pretty soon, I was back to shooting up, had no family, and faced homelessness. I was sleeping under bridges, stealing, and scamming for money for dope. I ended up moving to a boarding house, but I couldn't pay my rent. I put as much as I could into two trash bags and left in the pouring rain.

I eventually entered a faith-based rehab. It was a six month program, and you weren't allowed to work during that time. I walked in the door and didn't know what to expect. The first 30 days, I'd meet with the counselor every week. I trusted him and said I would do whatever I needed to. I went Level 1 after 30 days. The instructor challenged me to think. It had been a long time since I had to sit and read and think. I was against everything at first. I watched a film that answered a lot of questions.

I became more open and got deep into the word. I read the New and Old Testament. I was amazed by the stories and characters in the Bible. When I got into the New Testament, I felt the loving hand of Jesus Christ. We were not allowed to lead devotion until Level 3. When I was in Level 2, an RA asked me to do the devotion. When I got up to the pulpit, it all came out. I gave my testimony, and everyone was crying. While talking about my mom, I realized my mistakes were not her fault. I made my own decisions to do things, and I manipulated people and situations. Up until that point, I never knew how to forgive myself. I carried my burden, but it suddenly came off of me. Eventually, the Level 3 counselor promoted me to Level 3 and asked me to be an RA. He said I was a leader.

I found a church I fell in love with. I started serving at the church. I

got an internship doing rescue with the homeless in Greenville. I had a gift of understanding scripture and making it understandable to someone else. I applied to trucking school and got in. I connected with other truckers who are Christians and have become spiritual advisors to me. They saw something in me and understood that I have an assignment from God. I now know why God put a desire for trucking in my heart. I can speak to anyone from a country club to a corner store.

God allowed me to go through all of this. He had His hand on me. He had work for me to do, and I now understand it was necessary in order to get me to where I am today. Relationships are being restored, and God is continually putting people in my path.

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CHAPTER 4

Is This What Life Is Really About?

I owned a successful fleet of semi-trucks.

I served six successful years in the United States Army.

I graduated from Airborne and Ranger School.

I reached the rank of Staff-Sergeant.

I thought, “Life has to be for something else, for something better than this.”

I was considered to be a medium-class productive member of society who owned a successful fleet of semi-trucks and contributed positively to the economy. Prior to that, I served six successful years in the United States Army. I had the privilege of graduating from Airborne and Ranger School and was honorably discharged with the rank of Staff-Sergeant. Any time I saw someone in need of help, I always volunteered to help without expecting anything in return. I always made sure not to hurt nor take advantage of anyone. Anyone who knew me knew they could depend on me for anything they needed help with.

As a young entrepreneur, I had the ambition for success. I was about to achieve what many strive to achieve; a stable and comfortable financial income to supplement a comfortable lifestyle. I realized that once I accomplished what I set out to do, I would be in a position where I could retire at an early age, which would be 32 at that time. I began to ask myself, “Is this what life is really about, becoming successful, retiring, traveling, and that’s it? That’s what society teaches us that life is about? How sad and boring that is! Life has to be for something else, something better than this!”

I then realized I had been blinded by pursuing what I had been taught to pursue since I was young. My parents, school, TV influence, friends, and neighbors; from all of them, I learned to pursue financial

stability, a beautiful family, and success. Once I had achieved it, I realized they were wrong. I found it easy to achieve all that, and it was when I achieved it that I realized I must really find out what life is really about.

As a cultural born Roman-Catholic, I never really attended church or prayed. All I did everyday was to thank God and symbolize honor and respect towards Him by sliding my right hand, forming a cross as I touched my forehead, down to my heart, then to my left shoulder and finishing in my right shoulder. That's what I was taught to do ever since I could remember. I didn't know how to actually pray to God. But when I found myself in the life situation I described, I finally found myself talking to God. I looked at the sky and asked, "God, if You exist, is this what life is really about? Is this it? Get rich and enjoy life? It can't be! It was too easy to accomplish success, and now that I'm about to accomplish, what I consider, full and permanent success, I find it boring to keep on living with no more challenges in life! Many would call it financial freedom. If this is it, life is boring and has no purpose! What is life really about?"

If there was anything negative or bad about me at that time, it would be that almost every weekend I would get drunk with beer, eat pizza and chicken wings, and watch boxing on HBO. That was pretty much my ritual on weekends as a form of relaxation from every week's hard work. My wife, at the time, would support me with it. She seemed to be proud of the life I had provided to her and our children. Her only complaint was that I would put my business before our family. She was right, but I just couldn't understand it at that time. I felt that if I didn't put business first, I would be putting at risk the comfortable lifestyle I was providing.

To my surprise, I later realized God did hear me when I started to talk to Him. After the first time I began talking to God, I kept telling and asking Him more things. I suddenly felt in my heart to ask Him if I'm really supposed to go to a church, and if so, which church should I go to. I asked God such questions because I literally would not trust any man or any church organization. I knew God heard me speak to Him when my business began to do poorly. I actually began to lose business, and my company fleet size began to decrease. I had begun to

read the bible and realized that God was actually testing me according to some stories I had read from the bible. In other words, I knew God began to test my faith because I was asking Him to show me who He is.

I ended up losing my business, my marriage, and my properties. But in the midst of it all, somehow, I just knew God was in control of everything in my life. Just by believing that, a great peace came over my life. But more than that, the peace had come inside of me. I now know, it is the Spirit of Christ that came in me when I prayed for Him to be my Lord and Savior and told Him I want to follow Him with all my heart. My wife at that time did not take me losing my business lightly and began to act and behave very strange towards me. Little did I know, she had been actively involved with witchcraft for a long time. Since I was always focused on my business, I never realized the weird things she used to do had to do with witchcraft. Eventually, she did not want to be with me any longer. I returned to school to pursue my bachelor's degree and also became involved with an evangelical church. My new lifestyle did not suit her needs, and she could not accept the fact that I would have joy and peace through the new changes in our life.

I began to serve in the church I attended five to six days during the week. God introduced me to the manifestation of His divine power by allowing me to be exposed to life miracles, signs, and wonders. After being in the Army for six years and owning my own company for another five years, being introduced to my real boss filled me with excitement and motivation. When I realized that everything written in the Holy Bible is true, I committed myself one hundred percent and began to devote myself to serve the Lord.

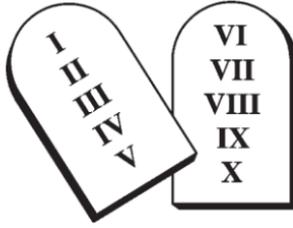
I am now an ordained minister of God who serves our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ everywhere I go. Eight years after losing my business, I am finally starting my own trucking company again, but this time with the help of God. Now, the purpose of the company I'm starting is to support the Church of God. The difference now from before is that before, I did everything for my own benefit. Now, I do everything for the benefit of others in the name of our Lord, Savior, and God Jesus Christ. I used to be a good person before I met our Lord Jesus

Christ...a good person on my way to hell. Now, I know I am not good, for only Jesus Christ is good. All I can do now is continue to live righteously to glorify and honor our only and true God and enter heaven when I leave this world. God bless you in the name of Jesus Christ.

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God's Law



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1 You shall have no other gods before me
- 2 You shall not make yourself any graven image
- 3 You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain
- 4 Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy
- 5 Honor your father and mother
- 6 You shall not kill
- 7 You shall not commit adultery
- 8 You shall not steal
- 9 You shall not lie
- 10 You shall not covet

Each of the people you have read about had to face God's Law.

Have You Obeyed God's Law?

Are You Sure?

You can go to the next page and read several more "Real Life Stories" or you can skip ahead to our next truth on page 30.

CHAPTER 5

I Am No Longer An Alcoholic!

I lived a “normal” life.

Worked hard and partied just as hard.

I became an alcoholic.

Our shop started on fire.

I ran in and out of the flames.

I can’t smell any smoke on you.

It started on a small farm in Carsonville, Michigan. I was born in 1954. My dad was a hard working Marine. We were taught good values and discipline from a young age. I say he was a marine because he served 8 years but once a marine always a marine. My mother was raised on a large dairy farm. She also kept us in line and made sure we knew right from wrong. I had two brothers and one sister.

We rarely went to Church, maybe on Easter, but that would be it. The exception was in the summer we got to go to Vacation Bible School a couple of times. My knowledge of God and the Bible were the stories “Jonah and the Whale,” “David and Goliath,” etc. But one day, when I was 13 years old, I was walking down the steps of the Baptist Church in Deckerville, Michigan. The Pastor was walking up the steps. He stopped me and said, “Mark, you're ready aren't you?”

I said, “Yes, I am.” Now I cannot tell you why I said that, but I sat down on the steps and accepted Jesus into my heart and life. I felt something change inside of me! The next week I was baptized, and I felt something happen again inside of me. It would be 14 years before I knew what those feelings had meant. The day I was baptized, I was reading a Bible and saw the first scripture that I really understood. It was Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever”. I thought, “Wow! Jesus, if that is true, I'm in!” Then the

pastor got up and preached that all miracles had passed away and there were none of the signs that Jesus did today. I thought, “Well either that book is wrong, or that guy is wrong, and I don't know which one!” So I never went to a Church again for 12 years.

During that time, I lived a “normal” life for my area. I worked hard and partied just as hard. I ran around with friends and drank all the time. I became an alcoholic. If you would have asked me if I was saved I would have said, “Yes. Hand me another beer.” I was saved but knew none of the Word of God, so I really didn't know who God was.

When I was about 17 years old, our shop started on fire. I ran in and out of the flames, pulling the snowmobiles out. When it got too hot, I was standing nearby with my mom watching the firefighters put it out. My mom said, “You know, Mark, with all of the going in and out of that shop, I can't smell any smoke on you.” Many years later, I learned the story of the three Hebrew Children thrown into a fire to execute them. In Daniel 3:27, it says “And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” Wow! God was protecting me, and I didn't even know it!

12 years later, my friends suggested we go to Church on Sunday as a joke. So we went to a little Methodist Church in Applegate, Michigan where a friend's parents went to Church. As a joke, we got up to sing as a group. Those people loved us right where we were. As we sang the hymn, the anointing of God came upon me. I was shocked! I thought, “Wow there is something real in this God stuff.”

A few days later, I was drunk one night. I said, “Lord if You will do that certain thing, I will know You are real and I will serve You. Three months later, He did it! When He did it, I knew it was God!

At that very moment, I felt a touch on my shoulder. I heard these words so profoundly in my mind, I knew it was God. “I did my part, buddy. How about you?”

I said, “Okay, Lord, but I want the Truth. I see many denominations all saying they are the truth.”

I immediately saw a vision. Jesus was standing in the middle of a room. All around the outside of the room were denominations shouting, “I got the truth!”

Jesus looked at me and said, “They are not wrong, Mark, but there is coming a day when all believers will come together through me and that is where the truth is.” From that day I began to read the Word and learn who God is. He changed my life completely! He delivered me from alcohol, and I am no longer an alcoholic! Only one of my old friends tried to contact me after that, and that was to invite me to a bar.

A couple years later I said to the Lord, “I will go where you want me to go. I will say what you want me to say. I will do what You want me to do!” Since that night, there has not been a day that God has not provided a divine appointment for me with someone. You too can see that radical change if you will give your life to God and begin to pray and study His Word. Today, I am the Director of Development for the Association of Christian Truckers.

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CHAPTER 6

Knucklehead

I was a big liar and a thief.

I quit school and went to San Diego for boot camp.

I went A-wall.

The Marines came looking for me.

The third time, they sent the FBI.

I ran around on my wife, lied to her, and drank quite a bit.

Before I start, I want it to be known, that no one in this story except me is to blame for how I acted and the things I did. I let down my country, my wife, my kids, my parents, and so many other friends and family.

I was born in 1956 to great parents. My parents rarely went to church or mentioned the bible, but they must have known Proverbs 13:24 pretty well. I was well acquainted with the Rod!

I was allowed to go to church myself when I wanted to, primarily by walking or riding a bicycle. My older brother and I rode bicycles all over our neighborhood. The church I remember most was Airline Manor Baptist. I remember I was baptized there, and they sure had some great meals. I had four siblings, two older and two younger. I considered our family probably lower middle class. I grew up mostly in Texas until about the middle of 6th grade when we moved to Oklahoma.

My parents were not mean parents. They did drink a little and smoked cigarettes a lot in our home. It didn't seem like a big deal back then. My parents fought with each other quite often. They did separate a few times while I was growing up. Even though I thought of myself as a good person, I really wasn't a very honest person. I was a big liar and a thief. It's nothing I'm proud of as I reflect back. I stole things as small as newspapers all the way up to a brand new farm tractor one time. I told so many lies when I was younger, I could not believe myself, even

when I talked to myself.

I started stealing early in life. I was probably about 10. My Dad used to often send me on Sunday mornings to a convenience store to pick up a newspaper. I would walk past the neighbor's house, take their paper, and hide it on the way to the store. Then I would purchase a soda and candy with the quarter that my dad had given me to purchase the paper. On my way back home, I would retrieve the neighbor's paper, remove the wrapping on it, and deliver it to my Dad. I had quite a scam going on. At some point, I got caught. Then "Proverbs 13:24" kicked in.

There was another scam I was so proud of back then. Anyone, any age could purchase cigarettes. I would volunteer to go to the store for my parents and pick up their smokes for them. I believe a carton was around 3 dollars back then. One store in particular kept their cigarettes shelved on a wall, after one went through the register. A person was supposed to go to the register, announce what brand and quantity they were buying, pay, then pick out the purchase upon leaving the store. I would purchase something small at the register, walk over to the wall where the cigarettes were, pick out the carton of Pall Malls, slip it under my arm, and walk out of the store. I remember 3 dollars back then would buy you quite a few burgers at Jack-in-the-Box.

I wasn't very good in school and did only enough to pass. I failed second grade and had to take it over again. I would lie to my teachers about getting my report card signed by my parents, then lie to my parents about the teacher not issuing me a report card. In my high school days, in Oklahoma, I was in trouble a lot of times for either fighting or talking in class often. I am pretty sure I had ADD way before that was a household word. I "played hooky" 2 or 3 times a school year when I was in high school.

I occasionally went to church in my teen years because of interest in a particular girl, not because I was interested in what the Lord had done for me. I came home from school one day in the tenth grade and found out my mother had signed my older brother up in the Army. He was already gone by the time my younger siblings and I knew it. Mom favored my older brother over us younger ones. So I started begging

my Mom to sign me up for the Marine Corps as soon as I was seventeen. In 1973, I quit school and went to San Diego for boot camp. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. Lucky for me, President Richard Nixon called all soldiers home from Vietnam while I was in boot camp. After boot camp, I was stationed at Camp Pendleton California. There, I signed up for truck driving as my MO. After all, that is what my Dad did most of his life.

As soon as I got out of that training in the Corps, at the age of seventeen, I convinced my Dad to be an adult signer for me to marry my girlfriend from Oklahoma. Seventeen was still too young to marry in Oklahoma, so we had to drive to Texas. I moved her to California with me, and we started a young new life. Soon, the Marine Corps told me I had to go to Okinawa Japan for a tour. Spouses weren't allowed to go. That made me angry, so I went A-wall. I took my bride, and we went from relative to relative for as long as they could stand me. Being the liar I was, I convinced them that Uncle Sam just let me leave as I pleased. I had no conscience of wrongdoing.

After wearing out my welcome with friends and relatives, my wife and I went back to Oklahoma. I lied to everyone, including employers, about my past. Back then no one looked at your credentials. I would make up a social security number and go to work. Soon, the Marines came looking for me, handcuffed me, and took me back to California. They would scold me and release me back to work. I would catch the next flight I could back to Oklahoma. This happened twice. The third time, they sent the FBI. After many lies to the Corps and many run-aways, they offered me an undesirable discharge and let me go home for good. Of course, I still lied to family and friends about my service to our country. I still regret that behavior. You can see what a knucklehead I was.

Back then, you had to be 21 to get a commercial driver's license to drive a truck. I remember waltzing into a mobile home sales lot that was advertising needing a driver. I lied to him about my age and license. I was 19 and had no commercial license. I was hired to pull 14 foot wide by 80 foot long mobile homes all over western Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle. That was the beginning of my trucking career after the service.

From my discharge in the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, I ran around on my wife, lied to her, and drank quite a bit. My wife and I had two daughters and a pretty decent lifestyle, but I convinced her to divorce. It was all me. She was a good woman, wife, and mother to our daughters. I was the one who lied to her and myself again.

I soon met my current wife, of over 32 years now. She encouraged me to seek the Lord and go to church. I started my first over-the-road trucking job, and we were both soon married. It was her dream to be a professional over-the-road truck driver too. So after we got married, I taught her to drive trucks too. We would occasionally drop in on a church, but we let the road and job be our God. After she felt confident enough to drive big trucks on her own, we both lied to a major trucking company about our experience in order to get hired on as team drivers. We drove for several trucking companies, and we were always sure the grass would be greener at the next gig. Then, one day at a dock, I broke a little bone under my knee. We gave up trucking for a bit. We purchased a place in Missouri and settled down with local jobs. We started going to church on a regular basis. That's when the Lord got my attention. Many things happened then, mostly from us slowing down, hearing and seeking the Lord. We became good friends with other Christian couples and a few pastors in our area. I was re-baptized, and I rededicated my life to the Lord for good. This time, it was for the right reasons.

Yes, I still do knucklehead things. I can feel something inside me tremble when I do these things. But now when I do, I buckle down on my knees and beg for forgiveness. God's word says He forgives us. I still have trouble forgiving myself for the things I've done in my past. I have asked my daughters and my ex-wife to forgive me, but I don't really believe they have yet. I can't say I blame them. I know Jesus has forgiven me though.

Billy Fields wrote and sings a song titled, "If That Wasn't God, who is Living Inside of Me." That's exactly how I feel. Something is living inside me. I have a joy in my step and a happiness in my heart. Most people that know me know my wisecracks are from the happiness the Lord puts in me. I cannot begin to tell you how many times my wife

and I have prayed for and seen the undeniable results from our Lord.

When I purchased my first computer, around 1993, I became excited and very interested in digital technology. I am not a geek or a nerd, but I love this technology. Years ago, I created a Truckers Website called Truckers 4 Christ. I was never able to unite Christian Truckers through that, but God knew back then how He was going to put other Trucking Ministries in my path. He has allowed me to work with them, mainly in web development. That's what I call an awesome God!

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Sin

On page 21, we asked if you had obeyed God's Law. *Have You?*

Most people will say, "Yes, I have. I am a good person." Let's focus now and take a close look at some of God's Laws:

Commandment No. 9 says: *You shall not lie.*

Have you ever lied? Told a fib? Maybe just a little white lie? Twisted a story to meet your need? Lied when you were a child? Lied at work? Lied on your tax return? Lied for your spouse or kids?

If I lied, what would that make me? A Liar.

Now let's look at Commandment No. 8: *You shall not steal.*

Have you ever stolen? Taken something from work? Taken a piece of candy? Cheated on your taxes? Worked for cash and did not claim it as income? In your younger years, did you take anything that did not belong to you?

What is a person called that has admitted to the above? A Thief.

Now let's look at Commandment No. 7: *You shall not commit adultery.*

Have you committed adultery? Jesus said, "Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Have you ever looked at another person with lustful thoughts?

What would a person be called that has done the above?

An Adulterer.

At this point we have talked about three of God's Laws. How many have you broken?

Take a moment to go back to page 21. See if you have broken any more of God's Laws.

From here, you can go to the next page and read more "Real Life Stories," or you can skip to page 41 for the next truth.

CHAPTER 7

I Was Always Trying to Fit In

I was raised in a dysfunctional family.

My father was an alcoholic.

I was sexually abused.

I felt rejected and abandoned.

I always tried to please other people.

I lost who I was.

I started doing drugs.

As I look back through my childhood memories, it seemed like I had to fight my way through life. I was raised in a dysfunctional family. My father was an alcoholic and my mother did the best she could to raise me. I made friends easy, but still found myself trying to fit into different groups. I played a lot of sports to keep me busy. Still feeling left out.

At the age of 9 I found a special kind of peace and acceptance in a local church a few blocks away. They didn't care what color I was, how well I preformed, or if I was rich or poor. They loved me for who I was. I was a child when I first felt the peace of God. We moved from Texas to Florida because dad got a job offer. So, unfortunately, I had to leave the only place I felt secure and safe.

After we moved to Florida I had to make new friends and try to adjust to a new home. It was then when I was in 5th grade I was sexually abused by a family member and by my best friend's uncle. They made it seem like it was a game we were playing. I was young and I was told If I said, anything to anyone they would deny it. So, I kept this secret to myself until I was in my early 20's. As, I got older, I realized that the secret I kept inside cause me to feel unloved and out of place. I

felt rejected, abandoned, and trying to fight for that special acceptance in life.

I would find myself remembering the feeling I had in that small country church. I believe that was what kept me going. I knew in my heart I was special to someone. I didn't understand it at the time who it was and why I felt so much peace I just knew I wanted that in my life.

I had to grow up fast and missed a lot of my childhood. When I got into high school I found myself still looking for a place where I could fit in. I tried to fit in with the preps. I tried to fit in with the band, I tried to fit in with the cheerleaders, I tried to fit in with the sport teams. Never feeling accepted. As I got older I found myself hanging out drinking with some friends. I was staying out late at the bars. I was hanging out with bikers and trying to live the lifestyle they were living. "Don't get me wrong, all bikers are not bad people. "Bikers help a lot of organizations. The one I was involved in, only wanted to party and control everyone.

I did finally finish school and got some college courses behind me. The problem now was, I always tried to please other people and did what they wanted me to do. Never living life for myself. I lost who I was and never finding peace. That is a lonely place to be. You can be in the middle of a crowd and feel so alone. I watch how people acted and I knew once again I was in a place I didn't want to be. Once again, trying to fit it.

At the age of 25 I met a man that drove a truck for a living. I worked at the truck stop as a waitress and he swept me off my feet. We got married a year later. He taught me how to drive a truck, and we teamed for many years. In 1993 we parted and drove solo for the same company. At that time, the Lord started really working in my life. See, when you are in a truck all day long you have plenty of time to talk to the lord, not too many other people to talk to. I started singing on the CB radio as the Lord gave me the songs. I began to feel that peace again I felt back in that small church. It wasn't long after that the devil started tempting me. Once again, trying to fit in I started doing drugs to stay awake and hanging around the wrong crowd.

Trying to sing gospel in one hand and doing drugs in the other hand. Talking about a battle for my soul. I enjoyed hanging out with the group I was hanging with because, I finally felt like I belonged. I fit in and they liked me. Not realizing it was about partying and getting high. I did my job and ran with the good old boys. At least that is what I thought. I ended up on the side of the road begging God, to save me. I had a large aspirin bottle filled with white power of all kinds in side it. I threw it out the window of my truck as I was pulled over on the side of the highway asking God, not to let me die this way. I had two small children and I didn't want the police to have to tell them their mother died from an overdose. God sent an angel that day to help me. He was a trucker driver that was also an EMT. He pulled over to help me and followed me to the next truck stop up the road. After he gave me everything in the world to make me get sick I felt better. He told me if I didn't get help, I could die. I was afraid of losing my license, so I never called the ambulance. I got back in my truck and started heading toward Washington. I made it to Washington just outside of where I was to unload. I started feeling funny again like my body started to feel numb. I was on a dark two lane road in the country. I heard two young boys talking on a base station and I called them to help me. Their mother got on a two-way radio and knew where I was. Soon after, the ambulance showed up to get me. Twice, God had sent someone to help me. I had a small dog with me and the mother watched her while I was in the hospital. The doctor asked me what had happen and I had to tell them I was doing drugs earlier, so they knew how to treat me properly. How ashamed I felt when I had to call my mom and tell her why I was in the hospital. I flew home because I couldn't drive my truck back to Florida. I was an emotional wreck.

God, never gave up on me. After I recovered, I went back on the road. I have always loved the open road. I started reading my bible and listening to the Christian Radio Stations. I remember reading where God said, "I was not to fit in, because I was set apart for His work and His glory." So, all those years I spent trying to fit in and trying to please everyone was a lie from the enemy. The enemy was whispering in my ear telling me I wasn't worth anything. That is why I didn't fit in anywhere. The devil comes to kill, steal and destroy your life and he

will use anything and anyone to do it. God has loved me from the beginning of time.

God is the only one that can bring you the peace you are looking for. The acceptance and desire you need. There is nothing God cannot do in your life if you let him. He will never leave or forsake you. You are the very apple of his eyes. You are his sons and daughters. Our heavenly Father loves you with an everlasting love. God is there to catch you when you fall. He is there to forgive you for your sins. Best of all if you repent of your sins and ask Jesus into your heart we belong to him.

I have been in the trucking industry for over 30 years now. I love trucking and I love the people. God has restored me and set me free from drugs, and a life of self-destruction. He will do that for you as well. I am now a road chaplain for Channel 21 Ministries and the founder of Trucking Angels for Christ. My heart is for the lost and the hurting drivers that are on the road. I have been where you are and I continue to pray for all the drivers.

When you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior, you find eternal life, a life with purpose. You no longer need to fit in. He is all you need. Joy and peace is yours. Call on Christ today to be your Savior. Ask him to live in your heart and change your ways. The Lords ways are much better than our ways. You will never be the same.

Just say this prayer:

Lord Jesus I trust in you, I repent of my sins, come into my heart right now, I believe you came to save the lost and dying world that we may have life and life more abundantly. Change me, mold me and make me new. I know from this day forward I will never be the same. Thank you, Lord. I am in the lamb's book of life, and I will forever spend my life with You. Amen

If you said that prayer and meant it in your heart you are now saved. The Bible says: Those who call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Get a bible and start reading it. You will see the changes in you and so will the people around you. Please email me and let me know you prayed this prayer and I will keep you in my prayers.

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CHAPTER 8

I Was a Workaholic and a Raceaholic!

I did anything for a quick high.

I was a spoiled little rich kid.

I went through a divorce and bankruptcy.

I just didn't want to submit or commit.

I was brought up learning about God in the Catholic religion, as was my grandparents, aunts and uncles who were very strong Catholics. I was sprinkled as an infant and went to Catholic school in the first and second grades. I couldn't conform to it so after this I went to public school. My parents made sure I received my first communion and the confirmation of my faith, but that was about as far as it went. I always knew God was real and anytime I was knocked to my knees, I knew there was a God to pray to. I just didn't want to submit or commit my life to walking with Him at a personal level.

I led a very troubled teen and wild adolescent lifestyle with alcohol, drugs, and smoking in front of my parents at a young age. I was very rebellious, yet a hard worker. I knew how to manipulate people; I just always ran life the way I would have it. I always was searching for the next challenge or high. I started racing cars at a young age, snowmobiles and even boats later on. I did anything for a quick high. I was a spoiled little rich kid. My father was in the boat business and had a very successful business which was volatile with ups and downs of the recreation RV business. I was brought up a very poor steward of resources. We had money that did not help us; it actually caused us issues from being able to buy the alcohol, drugs and racing toys. I led a very fast lifestyle. It never brought me any lasting joy; it only brought a lot of misery and tragedy in my life.

At age 18, a young gal that I was dating was killed in my presence because we were in a place where we shouldn't have been. We were

not supposed to be there, and a drunk driver hit us. I had time to pray a lot when I lost her and knew there was a God, but again, I didn't submit and didn't commit to be all in with God.

I went through a divorce in my late 30's. I had two sons that were not brought up knowing much Bible truth and I feel very sad that I was not the parent that they needed. I was a workaholic and a raceaholic. I was too busy for them and that's one of the reasons I went through a divorce. I am a truck driver and that's not a good field for marriage because of the separation of being gone all the time. I went through a divorce and bankruptcy. That's when I really got back to my knees and did a lot of praying at that time, but again, I didn't submit yet.

Yet I knew I needed to make a solid commitment to Jesus - to let Him become Lord over all of my life. I needed to let go of demanding my right to make my own decisions without including Him in my decision making (with the hope of Him blessing those decisions of course). I can remember pulling to the side of the road and praying a sinner's prayer with James Dobson after listening to a *Focus on the Family* message.

After that, I got involved in a church and the very first class they put me in was a finance class; they showed me how I needed to tithe (Honoring the Lord with the first fruits [See: Proverbs 3:9-10 for understanding] of my income, so He could bless the remaining ninety percent). I had race cars and race boats, but I sure couldn't afford to give ten percent of my income to that church. I had too much money, but God took care of that a short time later, and there again it was a submission issue.

I met my current wife at the age of 40. She was a career woman in the golf course country club business and I was in the boat business. We wanted to have a Christian wedding. She was brought up Reformed. I knew that we had to have God in the midst of our relationship. She never had any children, and wanted to have a child with me. I failed miserably at raising my own two boys because I didn't have the Lord in my life. We knew if we were going to do this, we were going to have to bring our child up in a Christian environment, so we committed to that in our marriage right from the beginning.

God blessed us with a church family; a small non-denominational church that really walked with us. I was still a truck driver and in the boating business; my wife was managing the country club at the time when she got pregnant. It was tough for us to go to church but we did, because we were committed to it.

Again, we struggled with being involved in church and getting filled so we could be a blessing, but God took care of that. He brought me out of the boating business and into truck driving full-time. My wife's country club actually closed its doors and became a public golf course, so she was out of that business.

Eventually we started looking for a new home church. We were blessed to find a church that taught the balanced Word of God, and taught the absolute importance of having a daily, personal relationship with Jesus Christ, inviting and allowing Him to be LORD of our lives - every DAY - every HOUR of the day. We were baptized at that church about 6 months later; both of us fully immersed and came up out of that water a new spiritual creation -- hungry for Jesus and the Word. We haven't looked back since.

For those yearning to be connected properly to God, there can only be one Truth and one way to God; not multiple. Satan has brainwashed many to believe there are multiple ways ... [as long as true Christianity isn't the ONE you chose!]. Jesus is that only way, truth, and life. He's the only One who paid the penalty for our sins to be totally forgiven, so they won't be held against us on the Judgment Day, so we would not have to pay for them by suffering for eternity in hell like others who reject the free gift of eternal salvation that He offers to everyone. I pray that others would find that same truth and that more would be transformed by the Word and the Holy Spirit setting them free from the sin that separates them from God. God's unconditional love (unconditional acceptance) once we are connected with Christ -- the peace that surpasses all understanding and joy unspeakable He gives us is real. I've found a lot of things that brought temporary and unfulfilling happiness in my life. I've been very blessed and spoiled rotten, but nothing else brings the lasting joy of serving the Lord and seeing others come to know His saving grace. Nothing else brings the

satisfaction of pouring your life into helping reach lost souls, and then helping them grow in their relationship with the Lord, because engaging in these activities is what blesses God the most in how we live our lives, and we not only bring HIM joy, but we will reap eternal blessings.

Several years ago God called me to become a chaplain for the ministry of *Transport For Christ*. Even though it took me a long time to come to Christ, along that journey I had stopped in other trucker chapels over the years when I was trucking. I would pick up a devotional, CD, had some fellowship, or just cried and prayed. It's just a blessing that these ministries are out there for truckers that can't get to a home church, or have a hard time finding a church they are comfortable with.

God has also called me to network with other truck drivers in distributing Christian literature for truckers to freely have at various truck stops around the nation. Our primary focus is to make free Bibles available for the truckers, but we also place other trustworthy Christian literature in truck stops for them as well.

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Penalty for Sin

One day, every man, woman, and child that ever lived will have to pay the price for their sins.

The Bible says:

“For the wages of sin is death.” -Romans 6:23

Death, meaning eternally (forever) separated from God. Every person will spend eternity somewhere. Heaven or Hell. (There is no in between.) You are either with God or the Devil.

At this point, you may be thinking this is hopeless. “I cannot obey God’s Law.” The truth is you cannot do it on your own. You need help. God does not want you to face the Fires of Hell and the curse of the Law, and He has provided for you one, and only one chance of escape.

At this point you can go to the next page to read more “Real Life Stories” or turn to page 47 for the next truth.

CHAPTER 9

I Was Constantly In Trouble With the Law

I woke up in the Indiana State Reformatory.

I spent 7 of my 21 years locked up in a penal institution.

I was coming up for parole.

I was born December 15, 1952. When I was two months shy of turning five years old, my mom died of Asiatic flu. She was 34 years old.

A little over two years after my mom died, my dad remarried. She was an alcoholic who only wanted to spend her time in bars. My older sister took care of us three. The youngest of us was only 3 months old. She used to say that her younger brothers were raised by a different father than she and Gene, my oldest brother. At 22 years old, Gene took his own life.

From the time I was 7, I was constantly in trouble with the law. At age 21, I woke up in the Indiana State Reformatory. I had already spent 7 of my 21 years locked up in a penal institution.

One Sunday morning after breakfast at the mess hall, a friend Mike who we lifted weights with took off in another direction on the way back to the cellhouse. I said, "Where you going?"

He answered, "Sunday School. It's better than sitting in the cell." I agreed. Little did I know, this would be a life changing choice.

The teacher was named Bill. He had been a band and orchestra leader in California before his conversion. My second Sunday, I asked the Lord for forgiveness. It was July 7, 1974. This journey began, and what a ride it has been. Friends in prison with whom I had committed crimes with began calling me reverend.

From then to November, I tried everything to quit smoking. I had a two-pack-a-day habit of Camel non filters. I would suck on so many lemon drops and cinnamon balls, my teeth would ache from all the sugar. On November 6th, as I prayed I said, "Lord, if you want me to stop smoking, I need Your help." The next morning I woke up with no desires, urges, or withdrawals.

After my conversion, I starting reading and memorizing the bible. I found a reading plan where I would read the Bible through four times a year. Oh the stories of the Red Sea, Joseph, and Elijah. Wow. I read anything I could get my hands on if it was Christian. My faith grew and grew. I witnessed to anyone that would listen. One man Jim, who had been in there longer than I was alive, came to Christ and became a Pentecostal Preacher years later after he had been released. He was a big muscle bound dude with a shaved head. He looked like Mr. Clean.

In 1976, as I was coming up for parole, two Christian brothers met with me. We agreed in prayer for my release, free and clear, no supervision, no nothing. The next day, I went to the parole hearing. The lady in charge said, "We don't know why we are doing this, but we are giving you a parole discharge. If we ever see you again, we will remember the time we are excusing you from." The next day I was released, free as a bird, no one to account to except my Lord.

After working for two years as a mechanic I enrolled into a holiness bible college and earned a bachelor of theology degree. Then, I went to Olivet to earn my masters. I became a youth pastor at a Nazarene church where we bused kids in from really bad neighborhoods.

I could go on and on, but this is enough to show the grace and mercy of our great God. The power in the blood of Christ will literally transform the life of a sinner headed to Hell.

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CHAPTER 10

I Was Given a Choice

Drug and alcohol use led to infidelity in my marriage.

My wife told me I needed to pack up and leave for good.

I had tried so many times to change my destructive lifestyle.

I started my professional trucking career at the age of 19. Growing up in a trucking family, it was just natural for me to join the profession. Some of my earliest memories are of my Dad's big red KB11 International with the name Honey Hush painted across the front bumper. Only married to my high school sweetheart for less than a year, I began to stay away from home for several days at a time. I had to prove to the older drivers that I could do the job. Very early, I discovered drugs were my answer to running longer and harder than the rest. Over the next eight years, my drug and alcohol use led to infidelity in my marriage. I began to have various affairs. My wife and I were expecting our second of three sons, and we had decided that when the baby was born we would divorce and go our separate ways.

We had been taking our three year old son to church when I was home on weekends. I grew up attending Bible school and going to church with my grandmothers. There was never a time that I didn't believe that God was real and that Jesus truly loved me. However, I was not going to church seeking a relationship with Jesus. I was taking my son to church because I knew he needed God in his life. For over two years, I heard a country preacher share the love of Jesus in a very simple and loving way. Many times I felt the Holy Spirit pulling me toward the altar, and every time I rejected the call to come to Jesus.

In October 1979, I was on my way to Kansas City when God spoke to me through the Holy Spirit. He told me that I had rejected Him over and over and that if I rejected Him today that He would never come to me again. At that point, I was given a choice Heaven or Hell. I began to talk to God as if I were talking to a close friend. I confessed that I was lost and did not want to go to hell. I had tried so many times before to change my destructive life style, but I always returned to the

drugs, booze, and women. I said, “God, I can’t change the way I live, but I can’t live this way anymore. If you will take me just as I am, I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior.” God took me just as I was. There was nothing I could do to make myself clean enough for heaven. Jesus did it all on the cross for me.

I returned home from that trip and confessed to my wife all the things that had been going on in my life. I told her that I had accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. As I expected, my wife told me I needed to pack up and leave for good. I knew she had the right to ask me to leave, and I accepted that I had brought all of this on myself. However, I returned three days later to see my son and retrieve some personal items. When I walked through the door, she asked, “Is it real? Did you really accept Jesus?” My response was yes, and that I would serve Him with or without her. I told her I would like for it to be with her. At that point, we got on our knees, and she asked Jesus into her heart. She then turned to me and said, “As of now, we start over.” We have now been married for over 47 years and have three sons who have Christian homes and Godly wives.

God has blessed me in so many ways. My Father and Mother were raised in two very different churches. Because of their disagreement concerning which church to attend, they chose to not attend at all. As a result, my sister and I were not raised in a home that was centered around God. Most of my church experience was with my grandmothers. One year after I accepted Christ, my mother was saved and my father rededicated his life to Christ. Mom is now with Jesus, and Dad is still faithfully serving God at the age of 87.

In 2003, my faith was put to the ultimate test. My wife was diagnosed with Stage 3 Cancer which six months later was found in her liver. The only hope the doctors gave her was to have a large section of her liver removed along with the tumor. The chances of survival were very low even if she survived the surgery. After months of chemo, the cancer appeared to be gone and to this day has never returned. Three years later, during a routine exam, the doctor found three tumors in her right lung. It was a different type of cancer from the first. After removing part of her lung, she went through another round of chemo. I prayed many times for God to heal my wife. Finally, I reached the point that I knew I had to totally turn it over to Him. My prayer this time was

different. I said, “God I have no idea what I will do if she doesn’t survive. I have no idea how I can go on without her in my life, but I trust you to get me through whatever is in the future. She is Yours, and if you decide to take her it is ok. I will trust you no matter what the outcome.” My wife has now been cancer free for twelve years. The doctors are very quick to say that there was a power much greater than their medical knowledge that saved her life.

My 40 year truck driving career ended in 2011 after a major three truck pile up which should have ended my life. I walked away from a burning gasoline tanker with injuries that took three months of healing and physical therapy. My wife and I agreed it was time to hang up the keys. I am now the safety director for the same company I was driving for when the accident occurred.

I could write a book about the blessings God has poured out on me over these past years. He is always right here with me through the good times and the bad. He never leaves me, and He will never forsake me. That is a promise He has made to all who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. So let me remind you that it is never too late to turn to Jesus. He doesn’t care what you have done. He hates our sin, but He does not hate us. He will forgive and forget if we only repent and accept the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

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God's Love

“For God loved the world so much, that he gave his only Son, so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

God loved His creation (you) so much that He sent His Son to earth to pay the full price for all sin.

Jesus did not come to the earth to do away with God's law. He came to fulfill it.

Jesus came as a man in the flesh and did not sin. Not one time. He obeyed the commandments, God's Law. Fully. He did for you what you could never do.

Jesus was beaten, tortured, and hung on a cross. While on that cross, the sins of the world (your sins) were placed on His shoulders.

Jesus died for and with your sins, but death could not hold Him; the grave could not contain Him. He arose from that grave paying the full price for every person's sin. (That includes you.)

It is only through God's Love, God's Mercy, and God's Grace that we can escape the curse of the law.

From here, you can go to the next page for more “Real Life Stories,” or skip to page 55 for more truth.

CHAPTER 11

I Could Never Commit to Anything

I hurt everyone around me.

Alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and smoking weed was a right of passage to adulthood to me.

I joined the Army.

My mother said, “If you don’t beat this, no matter where you go, you will carry it with you.”

I was born October 14, 1963 in Chicago, IL. I was the only child of Charlice Terrell and Jimmie Henson. The first thing I can remember was when I was about 5 years old. My mother and father were arguing in our apartment. My mother got my father’s 38, went into the bathroom and shot herself in the stomach. She survived. They stayed together a while after this, and then divorced.

We moved in with my grandfather. After a while, someone in my family gave me my first drink. It wasn’t a regular thing, but the seed was planted. I was spoiled by my parents because they did not want me to feel the effects of the divorce.

Around this time, I witnessed my first school shooting. I was in the 5th or 6th grade. An 8th grader got expelled. He went home and got his father’s guns, who happened to be a Chicago police officer. He came back and killed the principal and shot four more people. They all survived.

I would visit my father and his girlfriend on the weekends. She had four kids, all around my age, which was 10 years old. On the weekend of September 15, 1974, her kids and I found my father and his girlfriend dead in the bedroom. They were getting high off some type of gas cylinder my father got from his job. They both were 28 years old.

My mother's side of the family was more of the church going type. My father's side was more of the party type. I went to church for years, and no one even told me about Jesus. No one ever said I have to give my life to Him, to become a child of God to secure my eternal salvation. I looked saved, going through the motions, but I wasn't. Buying alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and smoking weed was a right of passage to adulthood to me because that's all I had seen.

I played sports, but this dark side was always pulling at me. I started drinking wine when I was in about the 8th grade, and then started smoking weed in my sophomore year. I made it through high school, barely, then I went off to college and dropped out. I had a few jobs, then got married after my grandmother died in 1984. We were immature and spent most of our time arguing and fighting. We separated.

I continued to sleep around, party, and sell drugs. I fathered three more daughters by two different women. My plan was to get married, but I could never commit to anything or anybody. I joined the army when I was about 28 years of age. I was one of the oldest recruits, but I excelled in rank. My drinking increased because of being in a rapid deployment unit. All we did is train for war. I did a couple of tours where I got out in Germany. I met my second wife who was a German national. My first wife divorced me because she found someone else. My future second wife was about a month pregnant when we met. We were together seven years before we finally got married.

During this time I worked as a manager. Drinking and getting high was still a way of life. I couldn't do anything without it. I had three major car accidents. After the last, my job cut me loose. This was devastating because it was my only source of income in another country. I didn't speak the language. Everything I bought during this time was from selling drugs or cigarettes on the Black Market.

We had just had our daughter, Destiny. I couldn't use my army benefits in Germany, so we decided to move to the states. I had three jobs lined up, but the pay wasn't that great. So one day my stepdad came home and put his check stub on the table. He was a dump truck driver. I saw that \$1000 check and said to myself...I'm in the wrong business. So on Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001, my mom's birthday, I

went to a truck driving school in Florida all across America.

I was done in three weeks and landed a job with one of the big companies. I sent for my fiancé and daughter. They stayed for two weeks. We got married and she went back to Germany to pack our stuff and then 9/11 happened when lives were lost the Trade Center towers. I lost my family because she was too afraid to return to the United States. This broke me down to my “Intro to Crack” as I went down the wrong road again. This is something I thought I could control.

I got an apartment and started dating again, but I was hiding my addiction. At this time I met my angel Rose who lived in the same building. I kept trying to stop using drugs.

I didn't depend on Jesus; I depended on me. Every Sunday I would repent, but every Monday I would be back at it. There was this guy that lived across the hall from me who worked at the food planet. He smoked crack just about every day. I would try to avoid him, but he would tempt me with the drugs and women. So instead of smoking maybe once a month, it turned into almost every day.

Rose was a woman of God like no other woman I'd ever met. She never got mad, never argued. She has the patience of Job. I didn't realize what I had, and how I was blessed with her. We dated for about a year, and then we had planned to get married; she didn't believe in shacking up. We decided to be celibate and she wanted me to move in, so we could save our money, but I was still making love to drugs. I started stealing from her even after she gave me \$3000.00 to pay off my bills. This was the first time I hurt her, so I decided not to move in, but to go live in my truck in Gary, Indiana at the truck stop to kick this demon out of me. I stayed in that truck for three months.

I would stop by and visit, but I swore never to move back into this neighborhood or building. Everyone told Rose to leave me, that I wouldn't change, and that I was no good for her. I told Rose if we were going to be together, that we would have to move, but my mom said something that sticks with me to this day...“If you don't beat this, no matter where you go, you will carry it with you.” My mom told Rose not to leave me, but to pray for me...this is not my son...this is not who he really is. Rose said she could see my heart through all the

garbage. Slowly drug dealers went to jail, and the guy across the hall moved. I moved back and we got married. My whole career was based on me becoming an owner operator. On my way to trucking school, I had met a guy that worked for Land Star. He convinced me this was the best place to be. So the seed was planted before I had my CDL.

I worked for one of the big companies for six years, still smoking weed because I convinced myself this is from the earth and God created it. I still kept drinking but not as much; still dodging drug test. Then the door opened for me to become a lease operator. I know now that the breaks came because I was married to a Godly woman. God gave me favor just by being her husband. I paid the truck off and then went to another company. God knew I wasn't ready yet. This was eight months of hell. Before the end of my lease, I had stopped everything – drinking and getting high. But when I got to the new company, the stress was high. I would stop by my mom's house and have a shot of gin and a cigarette. Then I would go home. The one Wednesday my stepfather and I drank a 5th of gin. I was drunk. I needed something to even out my high. I went out and seen some old crack smoking people I used to run with. I had gone almost three years without it. I went on a 3-day binge. It was the most I had ever done.

I hurt everyone around me; my wife, mom and others. This is the first time I saw my wife cry. She said she couldn't go through this. Finally, I was tired of being sick and tired. On September 28 of that year I got on my knees and asked God to take control of my life, which was something I was always too proud to do. I told Him I couldn't handle it. Please make me into the man I need to be. Take my marriage, my business, my family. Lead me, guide me and direct me. I cried and prayed for two days. Finally I was washed clean. I was free. Three months later I reconciled my life to God. I got baptized in the Holy Ghost and never looked back.

I quit work and took 30 days off just to be alone with God not knowing how the bills were going to be paid, but I knew God would provide. I was set free from all those years. Then I started working out and eating right. The door opened for Land Star. Blessings and opportunity came from everywhere. It wasn't about me anymore; it was about Jesus.

1. We found a church home
2. Relationships were restored
3. Our business flourished
4. I became a chaplain/Channel 21 Minister
5. I started working at my church as a volunteer
6. We are partners with about four different ministries

We have a blended family with 3 sons, 5 daughters, and 15 grandchildren. We still have struggles at times, but they are not ones I created, just from life in general. God didn't say we wouldn't have troubles; He said in Psalm 91 that He would be with us in troubles.

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CHAPTER 12

Hanging with the Wrong Crowd

Drinking, smoking, and experimenting with drugs.

I joined the Navy.

I started truck driving.

I became addicted to porn.

I grew up in a Christian home. We went to church every Sunday morning and evening, plus on Wednesday. I lived with my mom in Memphis, Tennessee until I was 15. I accepted Christ at a young age and was baptized around the age of 9 or 10. I believe I was sincere about my decision at the time.

As I got into Middle School, I started hanging with the wrong crowd. I started drinking, smoking, and experimenting with drugs. When my mom found out, she sent me to my dad's in Wisconsin. I still drank and smoked with my dad's permission, but I didn't do drugs.

After High School, I joined the Navy and got married. During this time, I had walked away from God. I got into porn and committed adultery on my first wife. She was doing it to me, so I figured I would do it to her.

After the service, I started truck driving. I fell further from God. I became addicted to porn and got married to my second wife. I kept drinking and watching porn, which kept me from showing my wife the affection she deserved. It damaged me, and I ended up getting married again before I met my current wife.

In 2010, we went back on the road and came across a Rig CD entitled "Dominoes" by James Payne. That CD lit a fire in our soul. We started searching truck stops for more CD's. We got the "Free in Christ" CD, which God used to bring me back to him. I believe whole

heartedly in media ministries. God is using CD's to bring people to Him. I still struggle with things, but I now can call on Jesus, and He will give me strength to get through the day.

Friend, you can call on Jesus too! Go ahead and call out to Him right now!

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Judgement Day

The Bible promises us a final judgement:

“And I saw a great white throne and the one who sat upon it, from whose face the earth and sky fled away, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, great and small, standing before God; and The Books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in The Books, each according to the deeds he had done. The oceans surrendered the bodies buried in them; and the earth and the underworld gave up the dead in them. Each was judged according to his deeds. And Death and Hell were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death—the Lake of Fire. And if anyone’s name was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.”

Revelation 20:11-5

At the judgement, books are opened. The Books contain every good or bad deed of every person. The book of Life contains the names of those who have put their trust in Christ to save them.

When God judges you, will you be found guilty or innocent? Will you spend eternity (forever) in Heaven or Hell?

To read more “Real Life Stories,” go to the next page. For the next truth; skip to page 65.

CHAPTER 13

I Did It All

Pot, speed, coke, meth, acid, drinking, and cigarettes.

I started partying in 10th grade.

I was horribly shy.

I just didn't fit in.

I remember contemplating suicide in middle school.

My brother killed himself; I was so sad.

I was the last child born of five in 1962 to an Irish Catholic family. My father was a carpenter, and he drank beer and whiskey. Mom stayed home until I went to 1st grade and then worked at the YMCA as an office manager. My oldest sibling began to molest me at age 2 until age 5 or 6. I had a great uncle also rubbing on me in inappropriate places. I always had low self-esteem. It wasn't until 40 years later, my next in line sibling shared he was being molested. Then when I was born, our brother left my other brother who was two years older than me and started in with me. I have since then forgiven my oldest brother, and I now wonder who molested him, perhaps our great uncle?

I felt the love of my mother and father, although Dad was often remote and had mood swings. He had an evil eye that could get me to crying on command. I was afraid of him until my thirties when I stood up to him and his nasty demeanor. My brothers were not angels growing up, and I remember Dad fist fighting them. Dad argued with my mother a lot and verbally abused her. I often prayed for divorce. I hated him.

I started partying in 10th grade. My three older brothers smoked PCP. My oldest brother's wife introduced me to it at the age of 15. I started to party, abusing anything and everything that was available. I became promiscuous. I did it all – pot, speed, coke meth, acid, drinking, and cigarettes. I remember contemplating suicide in middle school. I felt unloved and unwanted. I was horribly shy and really had no friends except the neighbor boy next door at home. I never did jive with the

girls. In high school I tried to fit in. My sister wanted me to be a majorette, but I was too shy. I tried the drama club, debate team, library group, even the Christian prayer group. I just didn't fit in, except the freaks took me in willingly.

I met my husband of 32 years when I was 18. He was four years older. He had a good job and a '54 Chevy truck. After dating a few months, I noticed he would go off at his friend's house into a room and leave me out. Come to find out, he was shooting heroin and dilaudid. I begged him to let me try. Shortly after, we were shooting dope every day. We moved in together and married in 1983. I would go to the streets of Washington DC to get dope. I was beat up and had money stolen more than once. This went on for about three years, \$40 for a pill to crush and shoot up. We both managed to keep our jobs and make the mortgage, but things were getting dicey. We were scamming people for money, writing bad checks, and scamming money at the atm when we didn't have it.

We both signed up for treatment at an outpatient methadone clinic in Virginia. During all this, I still smoked pot and he still drank. My husband was verbally, emotionally, and physically abusive to me. In the first two years of marriage, he gave me three black eyes. It took three times for me to get clean. The last time I got busted and spent the night in jail, I was scared straight. My husband continued to get treatment for a few more years and eventually got clean. We both stopped drinking, and I stopped the weed. This did not last long though. He picked up drinking, and I smoked weed on and off for the next 30 years. We went to credit counseling and paid back the \$30,000 we were in debt for instead of claiming bankruptcy.

During this time, I often wondered where God was. We did not go to church or pray, but we were both raised to attend and believe.

When it was good, it was good, but when it was bad, it was bad. He never hit me again, but his words and actions left invisible scars. We managed to retire in our 50's and built a beautiful 5000 sq ft. home on the banks of the Potomac River. Our days were filled with crabbing and fishing. He drank more heavily and got more abusive.

In 2008, my brother that had confided to me about being molested

killed himself. During my grief, I was told to get over it and not shown any empathy. Now I had depression and abuse going on. I asked God to come into my life, and I also sought psychiatric help. My husband picked up PCP again after 30 years. I was diagnosed as bi-polar, and I joined in on smoking the PCP. After about 6 months, I really did not like that high and quit. Then I demanded he quit, or I was leaving. I told him we had to go to church. I tricked him when he was high one night and told him we had to go to church, and he had to change how he was treating me.

After my brother killed himself, I was so sad. I asked God to come in my life and asked Him why He was letting all this happen. For two years, I felt an urge to go to church. One day, my husband took me to the nearest church to our home. He immediately got baptized and made a big show of it. We had about twenty people come watch and come to dinner at our new home we had built. I did not immediately jump in for baptism because I had been christened as a baby and I thought I didn't need to. Every Sunday for two months the pastor asked me if I was ready. I finally succumbed. When they asked me why I said that my parents made that choice for me as a baby and I was a believer. I wanted to recommit with that choice as an adult and be a doer.

After I was dipped in the pool and accepted Christ, my life slowly began to turn around. I began to find joy and peace in between the abuse. I learned to let go and let God. He is a constant companion. He is always listening. The more I opened my heart to God, the more He filled it with peace and Joy. My husband seemed happier for a while, but eventually went back to his old narcissistic patterns. He would blow up, clench his fists, scream and yell over nothing, and call me names. After he was done, he would make an off-hand comment about me dying. This happened multiple times in one year, each time more violent, and always followed by talk of my death. I tried counseling with him. He just fought the counselor, and we would fight more.

I called my pastor in tears one day. She had me pray and fast for three days and read the bible three times a day. I chose to give up pot, which was hard because it was my coping mechanism. The word told

me to leave the evil. I planned for a week to leave. I kissed him goodbye, went to the grocery store, and never came home. I called from Connecticut because he always said if I left he would chase me, and if he couldn't have me no man could. I was scared. I listened to the gospel and talked to God all day every day after that. I got stronger and more at peace with each day. It was during this time that one door closed and many new ones opened. God put supportive praying people in my path. He put them at the bank, the car dealer, my job, the CDL school, and the boarding house I stayed at.

I went to community college. I got my Class A CDL License and was hired on as a solo driver with US Xpress. I began to miss my Sunday worship and was having trouble staying submerged in the word. God led me to start a ministry called Truckin N Testifyin. Even if all I could do was plant seeds and tell people I met about the goodness of the Lord, that was what I did. Within two years, the divorce settled. I applied for my own authority. God said to name my company Truckin N Testifyin, against my accountant's advice to keep my ministry separate. A friend from my church worked on a logo for me, which is now plastered on the sides of my tractor. To God be the glory. This is all for His honor. I am able to pay the tithes to help build His kingdom. The more I give, the more He gives.

About a month after getting my rig and authority, I stumbled across an RIG (Receiving in God) Ministry CD and Channel 21 Road Chaplains. I applied and was accepted. I didn't realize there already was a huge trucking ministry out there, and now I had the fellowship of 150 other chaplains. God is so good.

I met one of the chaplains and married, thinking I was ready. However, it became another abusive relationship. I still love them both and pray for them daily. Neither break ups were ugly or angry. I just want peace and Gods love in my life.

I still hand out bibles and testimony CDs and spread Gods love everywhere I go. He continues to put people that need His word before me and people I need to hear from as a messenger from God. Yes, I have been blessed my whole life, I know now. The days when I questioned God, He was carrying me. I have been through some trials,

but God brought me to it and brought me through it! He will do the same for you!

I am a stronger soldier for Christ, having lived the troubled times. I vow to reach out to other brothers and sisters to plant a seed that can bring them endless joy. I ask the Lord to use me to increase His kingdom.

I used to live a life of depression, suicidal thoughts, self-absorbedness, and abuse. He took it all away and replaced it with peace and joy. I have forgiven and moved on. My mind and spirit belong to God. I now want Love to be the center of my life. God is Love, and the rest falls into place.

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CHAPTER 14

I Fried My Brain

I was angry.

I started using drugs. I developed a hard outward shell.

I was handcuffed. I was thrown in jail...

God takes us at our word....Raised in the 1950's, my up-bringing was not totally void of religion yet it was far down on any list of importance. I recall going to church with the neighbors more than any other recollection.

My first encounter with Jesus came before I was teenager, perhaps 9 or 10, living in California. There was a children's crusade with 'Cowboy Bob' at a church near the house. I was drawn to it mainly for the trinkets we left with each night.

But one night, I actually asked Jesus into my heart...though I did not fully understand it, as I look back, I believe that God simply took me at His word and never let me go.

I recall coming home very excited and, as the preacher instructed, I asked my dad if he believed in God. His reply was stern as he said "There ain't no 'God' boy...and don't ever bring it up again."

To that time, my father was my ultimate hero...this was the first time I realized that my father could be wrong about something. Still, I wanted to please him and worked hard in school making honor roll and trying to compete at sports.

My father passed away a few years later and at the age of 15, I became one angry young man.

My mother did the best she could raising us but she struggled with issues of her own. In the end, nothing can really take the place of a father.

I was pulled back to Pennsylvania as my mother married a year after my father died. He was truly a good man who was willing to be that father figure.

The problem was that I was just so angry and I didn't even know it. I had started using drugs while still on the west coast and now, in a strange environment with no friends, it seemed the easiest way to be accepted and numb myself from life.

I developed a hard outward shell as a person and smoked or snorted pretty much any drug I could get my hands on. I especially became fond of anything hallucinogenic.

In the course of the next two years, I literally 'fried my brain' to the point that I would come upstairs and just stand in the kitchen, not able to remember what I came out of my room for.

My mother would begin to suggest things like 'Are you hungry?' 'Did you come up for a drink?' There was little doubt to anyone who paid even a little attention, that I had a serious drug problem and, that my mind was pretty much gone.

Then Bernie, a person who I would hang with at times and who dabbled in selling drugs himself at times, came to me and told me about 'getting saved' as he put it.

All this guy did was talk to me about Jesus, share things from the Bible with me and just kept inviting me to church. I could see that something had taken place in his life...he was not the same...he was happy and truly energized about the Lord!

I finally gave in and went with him to church. After a few visits, and a few sermons about how Jesus could 'change your life and heal you, I was at the altar, kneeling and asking Jesus to forgive me for my sins and to make me a new person. For the next six months, I began to devour the Bible while God began to peel away at that hard, outer shell.

Then, after a half-year of enjoying this new life in Christ, the reminder

of my old life surfaced...I was at work (the first job I had held for any length of time) and I was handcuffed, read my rights and thrown in jail.

Before coming to know the Lord, and in the height of my addiction, I did a lot of things that I should have gone to prison for. A few of them finally caught up with me.

The sale of a substantial quantity of drugs to an undercover agent as well as the burglary of a drug store had me standing before an old hard-nosed judge and a lawyer running for D.A.

No amount of pleading from my attorney could get the judge to understand that I had been truly changed and the prosecuting attorney shot it all down as 'Jail-House-Religion.'

Testimony from pastor and church members did not sway the judge and I found myself carted off to prison.

It was only an 18 month sentence to a county lock-up but still, I could not see why God would allow this to happen to me after I had surrendered my life to Him.

I told an inmate about wishing I had my guitar and he coached me through making a request to the warden. In three days, I had my guitar and was singing and playing praise and worship music in prison.

It was like a little, mini-revival right in the middle of the cell block. I could do nothing but tell people about Jesus and share things from the Bible. To some, I was just another religious nut-case while others listened and accepted Jesus as their Savior.

I began to understand that God is in control no matter what our external circumstances are. The people in that prison needed the message of hope just as I had needed it and the Lord decided to use my circumstances for that moment.

Twelve days into an 18 month sentence and all of a sudden, my name was called out to gather my belongings. I was being released!

It turned out that old Elmer Beck, a policeman from the little town I lived in, knew the addict and criminal that I was. He also had seen the change that Jesus had made in my life. He took the time to get an audience with that hard-nosed judge and convinced him that my conversion was real. He convinced him to release me into the Teen Challenge program.

For the next year and a half, I continued to devour God's word and my mind was restored. What God will do for us when we surrender to Him is nothing short of incredible!

By the time that I graduated Teen Challenge, my memory and clarity of thought were healed by God's word penetrating through all of the years of drugs, heart-ache and anger.

While there were some ups and downs along the way, I finally surrendered to my calling as a minister. Today, I am privileged to serve drivers all across the country through the ministry that God has allowed. He has healed my mind (literally)!

I firmly believe that God takes us at our word...even when we are a ten year old child, asking Him to come in to our heart and save us. He will take you at your word and help you no matter what you have done and no matter what your age is because all He really wants from you is a genuine relationship.

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Wyatt is the founder and director for Highways and Byways, a ministry reaching out to drivers through audio and video productions designed to bring encouragement as well as sound Biblical teaching. The primary goal is to equip people to be well grounded in their faith in Jesus.

Standing on the Fence

I was standing on a fence, and there was an incredibly large group of people assembled around it.

On one side of the group stood a man, Jesus. On the other side of the group stood another man, Satan. Separating them, running through the group, was the fence I was standing on.

Both Jesus and Satan began calling to the people in the group and, one by one, each having made up his or her mind, each went to either Jesus or Satan.

This kept going on, and eventually Jesus had gathered around him a group of people from the larger crowds, as did Satan. But I joined neither group. I stood on the fence. Then Jesus and his people left and disappeared. So too did Satan and his people.

And I was left alone, standing on the fence.

As I stood there, Satan came back. He appeared to be looking for something that he'd lost. I said, "Have you lost something?"

Satan looked straight at me and replied, "No, there you are. Come with me."

"But," I said, "I stood on the fence. I chose neither you nor Him."

"That's okay," said Satan. "I own the fence. You belong to me."

You may go to the next page for more "Real Life Stories," or skip to page 74 for more truth.

CHAPTER 15

I Went to Truck Driving School

I purchased a truck.

I was gone 4-6 weeks at a time.

I ended up divorced.

I remarried.

I ended up divorced again.

I was very unhappy and sad until...

I met my wife Joyce in early 1964 at Broadway Assembly church in Lorain, OH. My family moved to Lorain from West Virginia when I was 12 in 1962. When I was 13, my cousin Wesley invited me to church. There was a revival going on the night I got saved. I felt so free and clean, I went to every service. Most of the time I had to hitchhike because my Mom and Dad never followed Jesus. When I was living in West Virginia I used to go with my Grandmother, but I was too young to understand. But I know her prayers followed me even after her death.

Joyce and I fell madly in love at the young age of 13 and 14. As too many teenagers do, we let the hormones and testosterone take over our lives. She got pregnant, so at age 17 we were married. Now that little bit pregnant goes by the name of Jeff and he is 6'2". We drifted away from church. A year later we had our second son, Brian. I was laid off from Ford Motor company in late 1979. In February 1980, I went to North American Van Lines truck driving school and purchased a truck through them. I was gone 4–6 weeks at a time. As you can guess, that doesn't make for a strong marriage. After fifteen years of marriage and being away from God we ended up divorced. We were both at

fault here, not just by the poor decisions we made, but because we had turned our backs on God, and Satan just had his way with us. I remarried in 1983 and she remarried in 1985. I sold my truck and got off the road and moved to Tennessee in the fall of 1984.

My second wife was complaining about me being gone so much. I had lost the love of my life over driving; I didn't want another divorce. Well in the winter of 1987, I ended up divorced anyhow. You see when you don't follow God, Satan has a field day with you.

In September of 1988, I went up to Ohio to see my sons and my Dad. Brian and his then girlfriend (his wife now, Maria) was about to have a baby and I wanted to buy them a gift for the baby. Brian had moved, and I didn't have his new phone number. I called Joyce and asked for his new number and also asked her what they may need. She said they needed a car seat and that she could get me a discount at Sears where she worked. I met her the next day and bought them the car seat. We then went to lunch in the mall. She could tell I was very unhappy and sad because of the way my life had turned out. She started to cry and said I was too good a man for all this bad to be happening to. We then left the restaurant; while walking thru the mall, I asked her if she had to return to work. She said no, so I asked her if she wanted to go for a drive.

She said I will follow you anywhere; I said even to Tennessee? She said YES!! I asked her what her husband would think about that? She said he wouldn't be too happy, but he knows how she still felt about me. I really believe we were meant to be together, but because we forged ahead and got out of God's plan for us, it all fell apart.

She moved to Tennessee in November of 1988. She was able to transfer to a Sears near our home. In Jan 1988, I began working for Builders Transport in LaVergne, TN as a dispatcher. The terminal manager that interviewed me asked me if I had ever dispatched before. I said no, but I have been dispatched. He asked me if I knew how to work a computer and I said no but I have hauled a bunch of them. Bless his heart he hired me anyway. In the fall of that year they opened a flatbed office at this terminal. I became the terminal manager of this fleet. I remained the manager until Spring of 1998 at which time I left

them because they were going out of business.

I went to work for Deaton Truck Lines as a recruiter working out of my home. It was a real sweet deal until the VP that hired me left 2 months later. That's when my eyes were opened, and I could see I was on another sinking ship. In July of 1998, I was asked to come to Cuba, Alabama for an interview with McElroy Truck Lines. They were going to open a terminal in middle Tennessee and was looking for a terminal manager. Going to work for MTL was one of the best moves of my life. I worked there 17 years, retiring in August 2015.

Keep in mind the only time Joyce and I had ever darkened the door of a church was when we were married in 1989. We bought a new home in 1989, owned a boat, car and pick-up truck. We were debt free in 1998 and had all we needed. In early June 2007, I came home from work one day and planted my keister in my chair. Joyce said we need to talk; man, I hate them grown up talks. We had all we needed but I could tell she wasn't really truly happy. She said she had been watching the 700 club and had turned her life back over to Christ.

I don't have the words to explain to you how that made me feel. I was relieved in some way to know she would be serving God again. You see I had always blamed myself for our failures especially with God. Then she said I can't do this alone. I told her I was happy for her, but I wasn't ready for that. I told her I was happy and that I had all I needed. That's when she said I know you're not ready and you have almost all you need, but there is one thing missing in your life. I said, What's that? She said JOY.

For the first time in forty years the Holy Spirit of God spoke to me. You see when I was seventeen, I told God I would never ask Him for anything. I felt like I wasn't worthy of His grace or His mercy. After all I had been through, I never once cried out to Him. But suddenly He started talking to me. He loved on me for three solid months. We started attending River of Life Church in Smyrna, TN. I would go on Sunday mornings with my wife. Sometimes the music would make me cry, but when the altar call came I headed for the door. I wasn't going to get saved for my wife and I wasn't ready.

Again, the Holy Spirit talked to me daily, almost hourly; He wouldn't let up. Every time I gave Him an excuse why I couldn't serve Him, He gave me a reason why I could. After three months of this, I was losing my mind. My wife was going to the Ladies' Monday morning prayer meetings lifting me up in prayer.

September 17th, we went to the morning service; I bolted out the door during the altar call. Late that afternoon my wife and I were sitting on the patio. I told her my biggest regret in my life was that I didn't raise our sons in church. She said you're still their Daddy and you're still alive; it's not too late.

I said let's go to church tonight. I can't remember what the preacher preached on that night, but I hit that altar at the end of the service. I cried out to Jesus and asked Him to forgive me!! I was **SNOTT SLINGING SAVED!!** God came down and **LOVED ON ME**, He set me free from alcohol, nicotine and porn. I was free and free at last. When I stood up, the Monday Morning Ladies' prayer group was standing there over us the whole time we were at the altar.

Long story short, in 2012 I started a Chaplaincy program called Channel 21 Ministries for truck drivers. We have helped over 150 truck drivers become a Road Chaplain. We have had over one hundred folks saved through this program. God has been so faithful. I received my minister's license in 2011 and I am currently Care Pastor at River of Life, Founder and Senior Chaplain for Channel 21 Ministries. God has been so good to Joyce and me. We have seen miracle after miracle occur in the past 11 years.

I pray that God will reveal Himself to you if you are not walking with Him. He is a loving God and it is never too late to come home. I was 57 years old and He saved my soul!!! You can call me anytime!

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CHAPTER 16

The Worst Time in My Life Has Become My Greatest Turning Point

My path of destruction started with a mere single beer.

Drinking led to the abuse of all kinds of drugs.

I've been arrested and locked up for being drunk.

I've demolished four vehicles all within two miles of where I lived.

This lifestyle continued, breaking my marriage apart.

My second marriage disintegrated too.

Bitterness, hatred, and revenge filled me, until...

I wish I could say I lived my whole life serving God, but it isn't so. My path of destruction started with a mere single beer – a casual walk into the ways of the world. Immediately, Satan began weaving his web of confusion and deceit into my life. Drinking led to the abuse of all kinds of drugs. Soon, I was caught up in a lifestyle that centered around my fleshly desires. I was hooked on the world.

My life started with such hope. I am the youngest of five children, and my parents are fine Christian people. We attended our Mennonite church three times a week where my uncle was the pastor. They did an excellent job raising us through the sixties and seventies on a modest carpenter's income. They taught us the important things in life: a life centered around God, love, church, and family.

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." You see, I didn't just wake up one morning and say, "This is the day I'm going to start down a path of godless living." There was no chip on my shoulder against religion, but I didn't have fear for the Almighty God. I was a fool.

I've been arrested and locked up for being drunk. I've sobered up in the emergency rooms of hospitals. I've found myself in bushes, fields, and gravel parking lots with no recollection of where I was or how I got there. I've demolished four vehicles all within two miles of where I lived.

One morning, coming home from work, I veered off the left shoulder of the road at a high speed. The car dropped over onto its side, sliding along till the front dug in. It began flipping over and sent me through the passenger side window. I landed 75 feet from the car where it ended up on its roof. What took seconds played through my mind in slow motion. "When am I going to land?" I asked God. "When am I going to stop rolling." Landing in soft grass just inches away from the hard pavement, I know His angels were with me that morning.

This same lifestyle continued, breaking my marriage apart. I was shattered. God spoke to me, but I did not yield. "Oh, I can straighten my life out. I know what to do. No problem."

My second marriage disintegrated too. The divorce took its toll on me. Bitterness, hatred, and revenge filled me. It was eating me like a cancer. Satan was going in for the kill. Only the thought of my children needing me kept me from crossing the line to insanity.

At this point, I had drifted farther from God than I ever had before. I had no feeling any more. My heart was hardened by sin. No longer could I hear the Holy Spirit calling. No tears of remorse filled my eyes. I started to see my destiny – my life ending in a car wreck. I knew I would be forever in the depths of hell, but I couldn't change. Though my drinking was less often, when I did drink, it was violent and extreme binges.

In the summer of 1992, after straightening up for a while, I rented a car and spent some time in Georgia visiting my daughter. After returning to Virginia, I had one night left before I returned the car. I met up with an old drinking friend, and the fuse for disaster was lit. After many hours of drinking, we went for a ride. It was a road I was familiar with. Our speed was probably as fast as the car could go. A stop sign came out of nowhere. We crossed the road, hit a dirt bank, and

became air born. The car nose-dived into a small pine tree. Both of us rolled out onto the ground in great pain, but we were alive.

A day or two later, reality set in like a nightmare. My back injury caused agonizing pain, and I was unable to get out of bed for many days. I was in serious trouble with the law for leaving the scene of the accident, and the car I totaled was uninsured. I asked God, "Why am I still here?" By all the natural laws, I should've been dead.

"Are you ready to change your life and serve only Me?" I heard God whisper once again to me. "Yes, Lord, I am ready," I said. "But I'm broken, my life is at its worst. How can I ever be of any value to You?"

This truth became very clear to me: if I were to repent and turn my life totally over to Him, He would wash away all my sins and give me a new start even though I didn't deserve it. I did repent that day with help from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. My life changed from that very day. I have remained sober for 26 years now and counting, and I am free from the bondage of narcotics.

I don't know how many chances one has with God to repent, but for me I felt this was my last opportunity. I began to fear God. From that moment on, I have been filled with understanding and direction like never before. What was the worst time in my life has become my greatest turning point.

God did not fail with His promises. There was a period of testing on my part and then the blessings came rolling in. He restored my health. He healed my back so I could work again and continue my driving career. He opened new doors for my business. He gave me a new Christian wife and another wonderful daughter.

If I could go back and relive the years where I strayed, I most certainly would have never taken that first sip of beer or popped that first pill or smoked that first joint. You may think there is no harm in it, but can you take that chance? The obituaries are full of people that, like me, thought they were the exception to the rule.

I now have no desire to be popular, rich, or famous. I only desire to do the will of God and to share my testimony with whomever needs to hear it. My final thoughts come from this hymn: “What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see, when I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace. When he takes me by the hand and leads me to the Promise Land, what a day, glorious day that will be.” To God be the glory!

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Day of Redemption

Jesus gave His Blood, His Life, so all your sins could be forgiven. Jesus paid your penalty for sin; in full.

Now it's up to you to accept or reject what Jesus has done for you.

God is inviting you into a personal relationship with Him as your Heavenly Father and Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Jesus came to show you the way because you are passionately loved and wanted. Jesus, before He was resurrected, said to His disciples, “...*He who has seen me has seen the Father.*” *John 14:9*

If you repent for breaking God's Law and put your trust in Jesus, when God looks at you, He will not see a liar, a thief, an adulterer, or a law breaker but he will see a person that Jesus has redeemed from the curse of the Law, one that Jesus paid the full penalty for their sin. God will see the Blood of Jesus that has washed you as white as snow. Only through Jesus can you be right with God.

You may go to the next page for more “Real Life Stories,” or skip to page 82 for more truth.

CHAPTER 17

“Good Moral Guy”

A poor country boy...

We never had much to speak of.

I have been put down and ridiculed.

My life growing up was totally normal. I was the baby of a large, poor family of six children. My father worked hard, and my mother was a house wife. We never had much to speak of, but I always felt loved. My parents split up when I was nine years old. My mother, sister, and I moved in with my grandmother on my mom’s side. I was tossed back and forth between my dad and mom on the weekends. I lived through a custody battle of which I chose to stay with my mom. Even though a broken home was really hard, my parents didn’t bash each other as in some families. Like many parents, both of mine remarried. I had a good stepmother and a terrific stepfather. My stepfather was one of the best Christians I ever met. After faithfully loving my mother for over 20 years, we lost him unexpectedly to a heart attack.

While my parents were married, we attended a couple different Baptist churches. My grandmother and several of my uncles were Pentecostal. This was very confusing to me as a teenager. One day my grandmother was reading her Bible, so I asked a question. “Grandma, tell me who is right. If my mom is right, then my uncles are wrong. If they are right, then my mother is wrong. Both denominations can’t be right.”

My devout Pentecostal grandmother replied with these words, “Stephen, you read this Bible and believe what’s in this Bible and don’t worry about anything else.” I have lived my life with this motto. I truly feel it’s the best advice I have ever gotten my whole life.

When I was 17, I met a pretty girl who went to church. She invited me to go one Sunday, so I went. I ended up attending every service for a month, chasing this girl. One Wednesday night, I felt something different. It was a tug that wouldn’t go away. Even though I didn’t do

drugs or drink, I knew something was missing. The pastor had given the altar call several times. I said, "Lord, if that's You and You want me to go up there, then let him ask one more time." He asked one more time, and I went to the altar. I asked for forgiveness of my sins and asked Jesus to take over my life. I felt like a new man. I was so excited. I told everyone I met I got saved. I went to work the next day feeling so alive and shared the Gospel.

I got married, not to the girl I was chasing. When I was 19, I felt the calling on my life to preach the Gospel. When I was 21, I was asked to pastor a church. While I was there, the Lord blessed the church. We grew from 60 people to 100 in three years. We saw around 30 people get saved and had 20,000 dollars in the bank for repairs and missions. I felt the need to go back into evangelism and left the church after three years. My family and I have led several missions over the years. We raised food and clothing for a homeless mission in Asheville, NC for two separate years and got to share Jesus with the men and women there. We sang and preached multiple times at a shelter in Charlotte and saw several people come to Jesus. We also were part of a homeless mission in Nashville, TN that fed and had church with 400 of the homeless there. Fifty people made a profession of Faith that day. If you do not know how to lead someone in a prayer of forgiveness, please find a pastor or another Christian that can teach you. I promise you there is no greater joy than helping someone repent and meet Jesus. I had the opportunity to preach on TV in Burlington, NC three times.

I have been places and done things I never expected a poor country boy from the mountains of North Carolina could do. The Lord opened a lot of doors for me. I am a blessed man. To God be all the Glory.

I started driving a truck in 1995. It has been a great career and has provided for my family ever since. I have met a lot of people and had several chances to share the message of Jesus. I do local missions and help with a couple trucker ministries. I have been put down and ridiculed over the years for hanging around rough truck drivers and people who didn't go to church. Those same people see the life I live and respect me for who I am. If they let a bad word slip, they say I'm sorry to me. These guys wouldn't think of donating to any charity, but

have told me they would donate for a cause I was involved in. I want these friends to see Jesus in me and hope they want more. In retrospect, the only thing Jesus was guilty of at His trial was being a friend to sinners.

I was with family one time at the hospital and an uncle asked me to tell him something good. He said he needed to hear something good for a change. I told him that Jesus loves him, and he off-handed said, "I know that." He called me about two weeks later and said, "I got to thinking about it and realized you were right. Jesus does love me, so I gave Him my heart." This uncle served the Lord until his death two years ago.

I know my story isn't a mouth-dropping salvation from a life of wild sinning, but the truth is my friends that everyone needs Jesus. The "Good Moral Guy" has to be washed by the Blood of Jesus just like the drug addict and drunk. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." I want to thank my wonderful wife Debbie and my four children Michael, Felisha, Deanna, and Dan for being part of my life through thick and thin. I love you and pray that Gods best be yours.

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CHAPTER 18

I Had a Dream to Be a Truck Driver

I became very rebellious.

I wanted to do things my own way.

When I woke up I was completely blind.

The doctors said I would be blind the rest of my life.

My dreams are gone. I'll never be a truck driver.

I lost my will to live, until...

I was born a preacher's kid. I had a dream to be a truck driver as a young boy. Around age 12, I became very rebellious. My father was a disciplined person and forced us to go to church. I wanted to do things my own way. Around age 15, I started dating a girl I had gone to elementary school with. We made plans to run away together. I wanted to get a place to live so she and I could shack up.

On my 16th birthday, I went to get my driver license. Dad had given me a car and said if I helped him in the shop, he would let me go on a date that night. What he didn't know was I already had plans to leave that night. That afternoon I was working with a chisel, and a tiny piece of steel broke off the chisel and hit me in the left eye. It didn't hurt. It felt like a gnat in my eye. Mama wouldn't let me leave. I went to bed early and told my girl we would go the next night. I went to bed, and when I woke up I was completely blind. It felt like gas or chemicals were in my face. It burned awful bad. My parents took me to the hospital, the doctors said I would be blind the rest of my life. He called my family in and told everyone the accident had destroyed my retina. My heart was broken. I stayed in the hospital 13 weeks.

The hospital contacted the Blind Society, and they worked with me. I was learning to read Braille. After about 5 months, I got pretty good. But things weren't right. I was blind. I couldn't see. Then one day, in

the midst of working with the Blind Society, my girl came. She was wearing a ring. She took the ring and placed it in my hand. She said, "It's a proven fact you are never gonna see again, and I don't want to marry a blind man. I don't want the responsibility of taking care of you."

My heart was broken. I had no will to live. Being a preacher's kid, I knew the bible and about God, but I didn't really know Him. After she left, I talked to God for myself for the first time. I was all alone, heartbroken, and I actually talked to God myself, without anyone else there to pray for me. I said a simple prayer. "Lord, here I am. I have nothing. I lost everything. I lost my will to live. My girlfriend doesn't want me. I can't see. My dreams are gone. I'll never be a truck driver." I said, "Lord, if You will give me my sight back, I will give You my life."

When you lay in the hospital bed or lay around back home, you have a lot of time to think. This girl did this. I prayed that prayer, and nothing big happened. The thoughts just kept running through my head. Then one morning, about two weeks later, I woke up. I could see real blurry. My mom was there, and she was wearing a yellow blouse. Mom couldn't believe it. When she realized I knew what color she had on, she began to shout. They had been praying. She called the doctor, and the doctor said it was impossible. They had taken out the nerve that controls my eye. But the doctor gave me the benefit of the doubt and took me in for a fourth surgery.

After the fourth surgery, I had to wear special eye covers. My parents had to put drops in my eye for a month. It seemed like a year! I went back to the doctor, he took the eye covers off, and I had 20/20 vision. I was overwhelmed with excitement. I was almost 17. I realized I had talked to God myself, a preacher's kid, for the first time. Everyone thinks preachers kids are special, but I didn't feel that way. I was forced to go to church and didn't want to. It gave me a hard heart. When I got my sight back, I can't explain what went on inside of me. My dreams came back. I still desired to drive a truck. I had told the Lord I would give my life to Him for my sight. Well, at the age of 17, I did not do that. I went crazy, drinking and chasing women.

Years later, a guy gave me an opportunity, and I ended up on a farm milking cows. When the farmer I worked for went out of business, the milk truck driver came and offered me a job. He taught me how to drive. Then I got this crazy idea I wanted to see the world. I got an over-the-road job, running wild. Never being home, I was faced with all kinds of temptations, including prostitutes and gambling.

About 13 years later, the Lord began to deal with me. I began to hear that prayer had I prayed over and over. God was playing it back in my mind. I made a promise and had gone wild, living in sin. I was the worst I had ever been, riding the highways, doing my thing. I would stop at truck stops and pick up tracts, 5 or 6 at a time, and lay in my bunk and read them. I read as a kid because I had to, but now I actually wanted to read. I was about 30 years old and married to a wonderful wife. I went to sleep at a Petrol Truck Stop and then woke up. I realized for the first time that I did not have Jesus, and that if I was to die I wasn't right with God.

That morning, I kneeled in the bunk in the freightliner. I asked Jesus to come into my life. All these years I thought I was saved because my daddy was a minister. I thought I was automatically saved, and now I finally realized this wasn't true. I didn't want to curse any more. My wrong desires left. I felt like a new man. I had hope. I wanted to tell the world. I wanted to talk about God and tell somebody how He changed my life. In the bible, in the book of Mark, it tells about a blind man. Jesus traveled and came to the town where the blind man was. Jesus passed by, and this blind man heard and called His name out. People asked the blind not to bother the master. He got louder and louder. Jesus turned and asked the man what He could do for him. The man asked for his sight, and the Lord healed him that day.

What I kept thinking in my heart is what if that blind man never called His name. He would still be blind. I think about me. What if I never asked and had stayed blind. I thank the Lord and give Him praise. My mind goes back to that day I gave my promise. He healed me. A lot of people aren't physically blind but are blind in their hearts. You may be the driver who is blind and have never called on the Lord. He said whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord. Maybe you never stopped

and thought about your soul. Just stop and think, I was a preacher's kid and just thought I was automatically saved. But the bible says every person must call on the name of the Lord. He may be dealing with your heart. You may have felt His presence. If you have been touched by what I have shared, the Lord is here for you to call on His name. Call on Jesus. Today is the day. Now is the accepted time. We drive on the highways and don't have a promise to return home, but when Jesus lives in your heart, you know peace. If you accept Him as your Lord and Savior, if something happens, you are safe and secure in the arms of Jesus. I want you to know today if you are a truck driver or not, I love you. Jesus loves you. He died for you. We may never meet here on earth, but we could meet someday on the streets of gold in heaven.

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Day of Salvation

How do I get saved from the curse of the law? How do I get saved from being forever separated from God? How do I get saved from the Fires of Hell?

1. Admit that you have broken God's Law.
2. Ask God to forgive you.
3. Confess Jesus as the Son of God.
4. Confess that Jesus died on the cross for your sins.
5. Confess that Jesus arose from the dead.

The Bible says:

“For salvation that comes from trusting Christ -- which is what we preach --- is already within easy reach of each of us; in fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation. For the Scriptures tell us that no one who believes in Christ will ever be disappointed. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect; they all have the same Lord who generously gives his riches to all those who ask him for them. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:8-13

This is GOOD NEWS!

For more “Real Life Stories,” turn to next page. To get saved, go to page 88.

CHAPTER 19

I Became Rebellious of Authority

I left school at the age of 16.

I was going to rework the world.

I drank 3 to 5 fifths plus 30-40 beers every week.

I had a great childhood, great family, and many neighborhood friends. As time went on, I became more rebellious of authority and my mother and father.

I left school at the age of 16 and was going to rework the world. I had many odd jobs until the age of 18, when I landed a job in a steel foundry. I worked here from 1972 to 2003.

In that time, I worked my way up the ladder from Engineering Tech, to Plant Engineer, and then Vice President of Operations.

I spent the years 1989 to 2003 drinking hard liquor. I drank 3 to 5 fifths plus 30-40 beers every week.

After working an excavating business from 2003 to 2008, I asked a friend in January of 2008 to help me upgrade my CDL to a Class A License. On May 15, 2008 my adventures as a truck driver started. I stayed with that friend for three years, doing local driving. He gave me a few long runs, and that was it. I got a taste of over the road.

My dear Uncle Wayne continually asked me to attend church. Occasionally, I would go. It seemed like each time I was in church, Pastor Paul directed the sermon directly at me.

Finally, on Easter Sunday of 2008, I gave my life to Jesus. Since then, I have been working diligently sharing with drivers, family, and friends on how they do not have to go down the road of destruction I was on.

Friend, Jesus helped me, and He will help you too! Call out to Jesus today!

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CHAPTER 20

I Could Talk the Talk

I made the decision to go to truck driving school.

I was at the end of my rope.

It's truly sad how disrespected the career of truck driving is.

My own mother wrote me a letter, telling me what an embarrassment I would be to the family.

When I made the decision to go to driving school and get a CDL, I was like so many others. I was at the end of my rope with no other options, so I tied a knot in it and held on. I held on not out of pride but out of a sense of duty to my wife and child and my role as the provider of the family. It's truly sad how disrespected the career of truck driving is. Even my own mother wrote me a letter, telling me what an embarrassment I would be to the family.

I persevered, obtained a CDL, and got a job at a good company. I didn't know at the time how good this company was. McElroy Truck Lines was a small flatbed outfit in Western Alabama. Mr. JC "Buddy" McElroy was a true servant of The Lord. Because of his faithfulness, another man of God was in place to completely change the course of my life. Darrell Spicer was a terminal manager that used his place to show drivers the love of Christ. I was one of those drivers. I had a head knowledge of God but no heartfelt relationship with Jesus. I wasn't saved, simple as that. I could talk the talk among Christians, but that was all it ever was, just talk.

Darrell had a genuine heart for drivers, and one day he handed me a CD. He didn't make a big sale or throw down any ground breaking preaching. He simply showed me a CD and asked if I had ever heard it. When I told him no, he gave it to me and just said to give it a listen when I had time. Well, I had time and plenty of it. That CD sat on my dashboard for weeks. I was afraid of it, as if it was a snake curled up there. I could feel God working on me, placing me in the right state to hear what He had to say.

One day going down Interstate 40, I put the CD in the radio. By the time it was over, I was pulled off in a rest area kneeled in my bunk calling out to The Lord. He saved me. I surrendered the fight I didn't even know I was fighting. In that instant, what was old died. What was new was born, all because a man that loved Jesus took a second to hand me a CD. I am no longer lost but am truly found. As a new creation in Christ I was able to become the leader of my family. I was led by God to a church that was alive with the Holy Spirit. I became the husband I needed to be to my wife and the father my children deserved. Darrell started a ministry to help drivers of faith to be bold and share the love of Jesus while out on the road. I felt the call of the Lord and became a Road Chaplain. The roads of America are the veins, and trucks are the lifeblood. There is a critical need for men and women of Christ to be bold and do something as simple as hand someone a CD that could change the entire direction of life. For all the millions of miles we may drive, there are only two destinations in the end: Eternal life with Christ or Death without Him, cast into eternal torment of Hell.

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CHAPTER 21

I Was a Mistake

There was something wrong with me.

Physical and mental abuse and years of sexual abuse.

Porn, affairs, picking up prostitutes, drinking, and narcotics.

I hit bottom. I spent nine years incarcerated.

I had an empty feeling deep within me, until...

I was born late in my parents' life, the fourth of four children. I never knew as a child what dad meant when he said I was a mistake. I took it as meaning there was something wrong with me. That was coupled with his physical and mental abuse and years of sexual abuse by my aunt. In my adulthood, I got heavy into porn, affairs, picking up prostitutes, drinking, and narcotic addictions. I did this all in an attempt to fill an empty feeling I had deep within me. In 2000, I hit bottom. I committed a felony and spent nine years incarcerated.

Early in my incarceration, I began to look at my life. I thought about who I was and where I was in life. I realized I didn't love anyone, including myself. I hurt the people who did love me. I knew if I didn't change soon, it would likely be the end of me. I said a very simple prayer, "God, if You are real, please help me." I went to see the chaplain. I got a Bible, began to read, and began to pray. I asked God to come into my heart, to forgive me, and to take control of my life.

Now, I see a night and day difference in my life. It's nothing I have done. It's all God working in me. I had bitterness, anger, hostility, hatred, hurts, addictions, and low self-esteem. But, when I gave my life to Christ, He set me free. He is a bondage breaker. The truth of it is, I didn't deserve it. It's a gift from God. I can look at myself in the mirror and smile. I love people. I go out of my way to help others. I have never been that way before. He's given me a peace and hope.

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It's Time to Pray

If you have already confessed your sins and cried out to God, you are saved. If you have not, it's time that you do. Pray this right now:

Dear God,

I acknowledge You as the Creator of all things. I admit that I am a sinner, and I deserve the Fires of Hell. I kneel at Your feet and ask for Your mercy and forgiveness of my sins. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your son. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, and I believe that You raised Him from the dead. Jesus, please come into my heart and fill that place in my heart that belongs only to You. Jesus, I declare You Lord of my whole life today. I ask you to show me my life purpose, plan, and destiny for which I was born. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and with all the gifts you have for me. I will confirm my salvation by telling others what You have done for me. Thank You for saving me and giving me abundant life!

Now that you are a child of God, pray this prayer to your Father Daily!

My Father in Heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done.

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

Give me this day my daily bread.

And forgive me my trespasses,

As I forgive those who trespass against me.

And lead me not into temptation,

But deliver me from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

(Matthew 6:9-13)

For more "Real Life Stories," go to the next page. To find out what to do now that you're saved, go to page 97.

CHAPTER 22

I Love My Job!

I enlisted in the Air Force.

I spent a year in Vietnam.

I started my airline career in St. Louis with Allegheny Airlines.

I retired in 2005.

I started my 2nd career as a truck driver.

Shortly after high school, I decided to enlist in the Air Force. I spent a year in Vietnam. When I returned to the U.S., I was assigned to Kelly AFB in San Antonio. I met a young girl, and we were engaged. It didn't last long because I thought I wasn't ready for marriage. So I broke the engagement, and we parted ways.

Allow me to paint a picture of my life starting with my early 20's. I was born and raised in mid-Missouri, a small German Catholic community. I had four brothers and one sister. All are married and have children. My sister and I were the only two that left the Catholic faith. Her husband is a pastor in a local church in the area.

I started my airline career in St. Louis with Allegheny Airlines in 1972. In 1974, I had to transfer to Indianapolis in order to keep my job because of layoffs. So there is where I met the lady I was to marry. After about a month or so, I decided to invite myself to the church where she was a member. That very first Sunday I was convicted. I knew that I was missing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. About two months later, I met with the pastor and made the decision to allow Jesus into my life.

After about a year we were married, and both of us started our walk with the Lord. Since then, we have had two children, one girl and one boy. Currently, they have two children each. In 1989, we moved to Charlotte and worked there until I retired in 2005.

That is when I started my 2nd career as a truck driver. It has been a

good one. I get to travel all over the U.S. and Canada. I'm 71 years old and still working. I love my job, and I have met a lot of Christian drivers out there. I have noticed a lot of trucks with amber lights on the grill in the shape of a cross. I like that. I also noticed a lot of scripture verses on the back of trailers. If I get a chance to pass them, I usually give them a thumbs up. I have noticed in the past couple years that almost every trailer will have some kind of sign or placard saying, "We're hiring." I know for a fact that in this industry, there is a high turnover in drivers. As for me, I have been driving for the same company for 13+ years, and I love what I do.

In my lifetime, I have seen the world change so much, especially from about the mid 60's. In my opinion, the music had a big part in this change. Taking prayer and the pledge of allegiance out of school was another. It also seems lately that we are headed in the wrong direction quickly. I think the term "political correctness" has a lot to do with the way our society is headed. Having said all that, I think it's important that we are sure about our eternal destiny. We are not "promised tomorrow." So now is the acceptable time to make that decision to accept Jesus as your personal savior. Tomorrow may be too late. I can guarantee you that it will be the BEST decision you will ever make. I made that decision on Aug 20, 1974.

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CHAPTER 23

Everything Was Acceptable

At 14, I started smoking weed.

I was arrested in Tijuana for gun running.

I was arrested for smuggling marijuana and selling heroin.

I suffered gunshot wounds, stabbings, and being tortured.

I was born June 21, 1949 and grew up in Imperial Beach, California, a small beach town on the border of Mexico. I was the youngest of three and raised by a single dysfunctional alcoholic mother who was bi-polar and sometimes violent. We were beat often, with anything handy, sometimes violently enough to break bones. My mom hit my brother with a frying pan, causing broken fingers and a concussion. Shortly after, she had him deemed incorrigible and sent to juvenile detention. He was then sent to a home for boys until his father came and rescued him, almost three years later. My sister was treated so badly, she fled home at 17. So at age 13, I was the only child left at home, unsupervised and running wild. It didn't take long for me to look for trouble. At 14, I started smoking weed. I began trying other drugs as well, LSD, uppers, downers, Peyote, Mescaline, and finally heroin by age 17. I was arrested in Tijuana for gun running. I would take guns I had stolen in burglaries and trade them for kilos of weed. I didn't realize that the charges called for anything from ten years to a firing squad. Almost every other American there, both men and women, was using heroin, and I fell right into that.

I was in LaMesa Penitentiary for nine months until my mother got \$7,300 from her boss. The person called it bail, but as I had never been to court or even seen a lawyer, I called it ransom. When you are a guy who looks like me and are addicted, you really only have two ways to support a habit, stealing or dealing. So, that's what I did. In 1967, I was arrested for smuggling 33 kilos of marijuana. After a 90 day observation at LOMPOC, I was given probation. They suspended my driver's license for ten years for transporting marijuana. In 1968, I was arrested for selling heroin and sentenced to five years in prison. That began a 31 year journey on the edge of the abyss including three

separate gunshot wounds, two stabbings, and being tortured and thrown out of a moving van and left for dead. I robbed, burglarized, forged, sold drugs, lied, conned, and ripped off my own family.

I had hardened my own heart to avoid guilt over the things I was doing. Everything was acceptable, as I had turned over my own free will to the demons of addiction. The addict tells everyone to leave them alone because they think they're not hurting anyone but themselves. That is actually the biggest lie of all because the people who love and care about us are the ones we hurt the most. Then we hurt all the victims we create by stealing and dealing, and the circle of pain and anguish only widens. I've hear it said that we need to wait until an addict hits bottom before they are willing to embrace change. I can't tell you how many bottoms that I have willingly fallen to, only to look up and see that I had fallen even lower than the previous time. At that time, my only concern was the next fix. I was unrepentant and "having fun."

In June of 1979, I started living with a woman named Renee that I had known since our teens. I picked her up in a bar, so of course we were drinking. I was actually calling myself "clean," taking uppers and drinking Jim Beam, because I wasn't shooting heroin. I traded one addiction for another and continued to do so for the next twenty years. Renee was the love of my life, but when she brought up getting clean, going to church, and changing our lives, I was not enthusiastic. My refusal to join her in this led to me driving her to a rehab for women, knowing full well I was losing her. In less than six months, I had a brand new prison number, and the merry-go-round was in full operation. I went through two marriages and divorces with addicted women, broken hearts, broken bones, and of course the "fun" of chaos and violence.

In 1996, I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. The last time I got out of prison was January 8, 1999. Because I was ignorant of God's plan for me, I shot some heroin just for old time's sake. I moved back in with an alcoholic wife, Janet, who later died in 2003. That wasn't working, so I paid a lady \$250 a month to live in a 16 foot RV in her back yard. I only worked enough to support my drinking habit. Renee came back to town after 17 years. She and my friend Randy

came to my RV to witness to me. She started telling me how the Holy Ghost spoke to her. She told me the reason I was still alive at 50 was that God had a plan for me. I laughed and told her the only ghost I knew was Casper, but I did go to church with her... drunk. Then, she started telling me about Teen Challenge, a faith-based rehab. Still laughing, I replied that I was 50 years old, hardly a teen. I lied and told her that my parole wouldn't allow it.

On April 27, 2000, I reached for my boss's business card to call him so I could work and get a drink. I had put Renee's number on the back and called her. She told me my sister called her because my parole officer had put a warrant out for a dirty test. All of a sudden, this Teen Challenge thing seemed like a way out. I could go there instead of back to prison.

I entered Teen Challenge on April 28, 2000, and God started working on me. My counselor, my teachers, and the Assistant Director were ex-offenders and former drug addicts. Now they were clean, productive men with families. They all seemed joyful and at peace. This was a revelation that this could be possible in my own life. All one has to do is take hold of the hand that Jesus holds out to us all. I had been an addict for the same amount of time that He had been on this earth as both the Son of Man and the Son of God!

In October of 2000, I was told that I was dying of Hepatitis C. The doctors said even if they put me on the liver transplant list, I would be dead before I got one. They laughed at the free clinic when I told them I wanted a second opinion from the Greatest Physician, Jesus!

Renee and I were married on April 21, 2001. My family and friends saw the changes the Lord made in me, and most of them have become believers too. I am amazed at all the Lord has done for me. I no longer have Hepatitis C. I have ten acres of land with two homes on it, my sister lives in the other. We have motorcycles for our ministry with "The Tribe of Judah." God has opened the way for a jail ministry at prisons, fire camps, and the county jail. When I go into these places, I tell them all that I have found the perfect escape plan, and they won't even be able to arrest you for it! Just cry out to Jesus!

We moved to Cedarville, California in June of 2002 and decided to run team for ten years to prepare for our retirement. Renee got hired right away, but they would not hire me because of my arrest record. I reapplied five times. Their safety officer told me they would never hire me. In January of 2003, I was in Renee's truck as a ride along in Phoenix, Arizona. We needed a B Service on Renee's truck, and it was a Saturday. I went to dispatch with a three page letter I had written to tell them that the old me has passed away and I am a born again believer, a new creation in Christ. The owner was a Mormon guy, and on Monday morning, we got a message to put my application in again. God is good! We teamed for almost three years and then moved to another company in 2005.

In early 2008, I picked up a CD called "Free in Christ." It was so powerful that we had to meet these people. We began passing out their CDs. Renee got off the truck in 2011, but I liked truckin' so I continued to drive until poor eyesight from macular degeneration forced me to retire in December 2017. Now, I find work to do that the Lord our provider gives to me. God is so good.

We are all born in a body with a mind and a spirit. The body is finite; it dies. The mind and spirit are infinite and will be somewhere for eternity. Choose life! In Jeremiah 29:11, the Lord tells us He knows the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm, plans to give us hope and a future with an expected end. The only expected end for me was always death by violence, a drug overdose, or a disease related to IV drug use. But God's plans are different! John 10:10 tells us He is not willing that any should perish, not me and not you! When Jesus is the one backing your play, you have the means to make it in this dark and dying world. Jesus saved me both physically and spiritually by the salvation of my soul. God's gifts of peace, joy, and love are second. Praise Him with a great praise, for it is a miracle that He loves us!

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CHAPTER 24

I Thought I Knew Best

My rebellion started in high school.

I ran off and joined the army.

Drugs, booze, and women.

I was looking for love.

I met this gal named Laura.

I watched her die.

I was born in Germany in 1959. I came to America when I was eight years old and didn't speak any English.

My dad was in the army, and my mom worked also. They were hard-working parents and tried hard to raise us right. They sent us to church on Sundays.

My rebellion started in high school with doing drugs and skipping school. I thought I knew best. I ran off and joined the army. I learned more about drugs. I went to Germany and learned even more about drugs, booze, and women. I came back to the states after my three-year hitch in the army. I departed company with an honorable discharge.

I continued to use drugs and booze it up! I was looking for love and all that crap. I had one relationship after another. I met this gal named Laura. I thought I loved her. We were in East St. Louis looking for drugs. A man shot her in the back. It took out the artery of her heart. I watched her die. As I was watching her die, he started shooting everything. I got shot in the arm, my dog got shot, and my truck got shot. I never knew I could run so fast on my knees and elbows.

That was it! That was the turning point of my life! A lot of other stuff happened after that. It wasn't good stuff. I remarried and went to church one day in Gary Indiana at a truckers chapel. I accepted Jesus into my life that day!

I really thought everything would just magically go away, but it really doesn't happen that way. For me, things got a little worse before they got better, and now I'm like a drunk walking with Jesus. If it wasn't for Him, I don't know where I would be today, probably in a grave. I now see His grace and mercy every day! I am a walking testimony, and God has cleaned me up a little more each day. If I would just be still and listen, He could do more faster. I look back at all the things I've done. The good Lord could've just taken me out. I don't know why He didn't. I've been nothing but a pain in His rear end!

All I can say is thank You Jesus for saving the wretched man that I am. Please don't give up on me!

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You Are a New Person

The Bible says:

“When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Say this:

I am a new person. I have a new life, a God centered life.

The Bible says:

“All these new things are from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ Jesus did. And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into His favor and be reconciled to Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:18

God bridged the gap of sin between you and Him by Jesus dying on the cross. He now has given you the honor and privilege of telling people how to find that same favor with God through what Jesus has done for them.

The Bible says:

“He died for all so that all who live -- having received eternal life from Him --- might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them.” 2 Corinthians 5:15

Jesus died so you could have eternal life with Him in Heaven. Jesus is calling you to now live for Him, doing only those things with your life that would please Him.

To learn more about what you should now do, go to page 108.

CHAPTER 25

My Need for Speed

I landed a job as a racecar mechanic.

Drinking, drugs rock'n'roll, and ladies were a big weakness.

I had issues from my past pulling me back.

My life slowly grew darker and out of control, until...

I was born in Sydney, Australia. I started working at the age of 16 as an apprentice mechanic. I became a mechanic because I loved fast cars. At the age of 7, I helped my dad replace the V8 engine in his GM Holden Manaro. From there, I found myself working with wrenches, repairing bikes and dirt bikes, and building remote control cars.

From there, my love of dirt bike racing grew, along with go-karts and anything else with which I could feed my need for speed. I really wanted to race cars and be a big name, as I loved to drive and was a natural behind the wheel. At the age of 23, I found myself as a very proficient Auto Tech and landed a job as a racecar mechanic in Australia's V8 Supercars. This was the Downunder equivalent of Nascar. I really enjoyed this, but at the same time it tortured me being inches from the other side of the pit wall. The place I really wanted to be was on the track.

Among all of this, I had an equally big desire to party hard. Drinking, drugs, rock'n'roll, and ladies were a big weakness and had a lot of control in my life. As much as I wanted to be a successful racecar driver, I also had issues from my past pulling me back. They always seemed to be secretly tying me up and making me feel like a failure. It was a demon I never knew how to overcome, and I just swept it under the carpet with another hit, beer, woman, or porn.

My life slowly grew darker and more out of control. I found myself waking up one Saturday morning alone at the age of 27, wondering why my life was screwed up. For two weeks this thought drilled me night and day. I found myself trying to blame everyone else for my mess. I blamed my parents, past bosses, and girlfriends. Then, I finally found myself having an argument with God. Being brought up in a

Roman Catholic family, I learned that God was supposed to be in control. Since God was in control, then He was to blame.

In my argument with God, I railed on Him and cursed Him up and down every which way. When I had exhausted my words and shut up for 15 seconds, I heard an audible voice speaking to me as clear as day saying, "You have been doing everything your way and not My way." Surprisingly, I found myself shocked and agreeing with the voice. From there, I remembered a small booklet someone had given me about the Good News of Jesus Christ and how He came for a sinner like me to forgive me, love me, and make me part of God's family. After reading it, I decided to stop doing things my way and to follow Jesus as my new boss.

From there, God helped me and blessed me in many ways. He gave me a wonderful American wife, and I moved to the USA to live with her. Jesus has given me peace and four beautiful children. Like many Auto Tech's who have had enough of being on the tools, I ended up landing a job driving a truck.

I love to drive. I love nothing better than being alone in the cabin with just Jesus and myself, enjoying Him. I know I'm a winner, not because I won a race, but because I now have a Father in Heaven who knows me better than I know myself. He truly cares for me. To be a good dad makes me a winner because my dad was never really there for me. When I'm on the road, I like to tell others I meet about the great things God has done for us through His Son Jesus Christ. God has also given me the opportunity to travel to Africa and Asia for Him and get to know many people all over the Earth who need His love and help. I'm writing this because I know sometimes when you're on the highway alone, it can get real lonely. Life doesn't always go the way we would like, but the truth is that Jesus is right there for each one of us if we will reach out to Him and ask for His friendship and help. I hope you too will find yourself on the same journey I'm on with Him, because to me He is better than life itself.

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CHAPTER 26

I Had a “Feeling”

I joined the Navy in 1974.

I turned 18 in the Western Pacific on a Destroyer.

I served in Vietnam.

I joined the National Guard.

I got my truck driver’s license.

I learned to fly private planes.

I started doing drugs, and my preferred choice was crack cocaine.

I was born and raised Catholic in Devil’s Lake, North Dakota. I thought I was Saved because I did everything a Catholic does. I was baptized as a newborn baby, confirmed, and had my first Holy Communion as a very young child.

I joined the Navy in 1974 right out of high school. I turned 18 in the Western Pacific on a Destroyer and served in Vietnam. When I returned home in 1977, I joined the National Guard. I got my truck driver’s license and started trucking regionally in the summer. I used the GI Bill to go to college but mostly just drank and partied in my fraternity. I quit before graduating but learned to fly private planes at UND and rejoined the Navy in 1980 to serve on Aircraft Carriers.

When I got out the second time, I stayed in California for a few years before moving to Minneapolis, Minnesota. I had several different jobs over the next couple of decades and still believed I was saved because I was a Catholic.

I was in many relationships with many different types of women, but I couldn’t commit to anyone. I started doing drugs, and my preferred choice was crack cocaine. I straightened out enough to get my CDL, pass a drug test, and got back into trucking in 2005. I had several driving jobs and continued to smoke crack. It was very challenging to drive under the influence, but I did it for 13 years with about 8

different companies. I never got caught, and was able to get by the drug tests. It was only by The Grace of God that I didn't kill myself or anyone else as I drove 80,000 pounds high on crack cocaine.

On Sunday May 4th, 2008 I felt compelled to attend a Chapel Service at Faith on the Move Ministries at the Petro truck stop in West Memphis, Arkansas. I had a "feeling" that God was about to allow something bad to happen to me if I kept driving a semi under the influence of crack cocaine. After the 8am service, I was invited to stay for the 11am service. I didn't have to pick up my load across the Mississippi River in Memphis until 2pm that Sunday afternoon, so I stayed. At the end of the 11am service everyone got up to leave, but I felt glued to my chair and didn't know why. I later realized that I was being convicted by God's Holy Spirit to not leave yet.

Chaplain Gaylon came back into the Chapel and sat down next to me. We were the only two there. He asked me what was on my mind, and all I said was "sin." He gave me his testimony, prayed over me, and led me to Christ that morning, right there in that little truck stop chapel. He gave me a Bible and told me that I was now saved. I was somewhat confused because I thought I already was saved. I was born and raised Catholic. He explained that I now have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ because I accepted Him as my Savior and made Him Lord of my life. I was going to spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven.

I got back into my truck and knew something incredible had just happened to me. I knew I couldn't do drugs anymore or invite women into my truck for sex. I went over to Memphis and got my load that Sunday afternoon. As I was leaving the customer's gate, there were a few women in the parking lot across the street. They were calling to me to come over to them. I knew I could buy drugs and have the services of a prostitute, but the change in me was so real that I just waved to them and kept on going. If I had not gone to Church that morning and been saved by Jesus Christ, I know I would have stopped for those women. Now, I pray for them and their families when they approach me in truck stop parking lots. Most leave abruptly, but some listen to my testimony and the seed is planted.

The next day, I made my delivery up in Champagne, Illinois. I went to a Walmart, where I bought a cross on a chain and put it around my neck. I knew I was saved, and there was absolutely no confusion anymore. I never take it off and wear it on the outside of my shirt as a sign of who I am and Whose I am. I belong to Jesus Christ, and there is no doubt about it. I never did drugs again. I joined a local church (not Catholic) in Minneapolis and was baptized in July of that same year.

9 months later, in February of 2009, I attended a truck stop chapel service in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. While there I met Johnny, another brother in Christ, and afterwards we went into the restaurant for coffee and Bible study. All the other drivers from the chapel had to go on their way with their loads or to sleep before driving again. Johnny and I had a great time of fellowship and became close friends. He was an owner operator, and I was a company driver at the time. We talked on the phone almost every day, prayed together, and thanked God for introducing us to each other. We met because of the worship service and our love for Christ.

About three months later in May of 2009, I had to quit my over the road job and return to Minneapolis to help care for a sick aunt. I got a call from Johnny, and he brought up the possibility of me becoming an owner operator. I was overwhelmed and told him I was a company driver and couldn't possibly go out on my own. He told me that he was looking to buy a new truck and that every time he prayed about what to do with his old truck, my name came up. He told me, "God wants you to be an owner operator."

I was too scared and told him, "No, thank you." That didn't stop Johnny from talking about it though because he truly believed that he was obeying God.

Soon thereafter in June 2009, I met Dan, another brother in Christ, at my home church in Minneapolis. He owns five trucks and hired me to drive regional flatbed. I was thankful to be able to be home two or three times a week for my aunt. Since I was to be home so often, he put me in an older Freightliner cabover that was clean and well maintained. I learned how to take care of it with Dan's help over the

next year and really appreciated his mentoring.

Johnny and I continued to talk on the phone almost every day as I drove flatbed. He kept bringing up the possibility of me becoming an owner operator. He and his wife ran as a team and had bought his Kenworth new in 2005. He had already rebuilt the CAT motor at just over a million miles, and the truck was in way too good of shape for him to just trade it in. He kept telling me that God wants me to be an owner operator because of his constant prayers about what to do with his old truck. We would go over the numbers as we talked on the phone, and he even offered to finance the truck for me.

During that same year, my aunt recovered from her illness and Johnny found his perfect new truck. He had spent the whole year looking while teaching me how to own and operate a truck. I took the bus from Minneapolis to Joplin, Missouri to pick up the truck. I leased on with a company in July of 2010, and I'm still leased on with that same company today. By the grace of God, I was able to pay Johnny for the truck completely in just 7 months from the time I left his driveway. During that time, I still had plenty of revenue from the truck to keep it well maintained and running efficiently. I even bought an auxiliary power unit to run a separate heater and air conditioner so I wouldn't have to idle the big motor and waste fuel. I found a very nice lighted cross at a truck stop in Georgia and wired it into the grill of the truck.

In May of 2011, three years after accepting Christ, I became a "Driver Chaplain" with Faith on the Move Ministries to hold worship services at truck stops that don't have designated chapels and chaplains. I am so thankful for what Jesus has done in my life that I witness to everyone who will listen on CB radio and at truck stops or anywhere at all.

I consider this to be God's truck, and He pays me to drive it. As of December, 2018 the truck has over 2.3 million miles on it with just the one rebuild Johnny did years ago. Over one million of these miles were put on by me running coast to coast. The transmission and both rear end gear boxes are stock, and only the fluids have been changed. The injectors are original and have never been changed. Usually a million miles is a lot for a set of injectors, and Caterpillar and

Kenworth are both amazed by their longevity. I tell everyone that this is God's truck, and it will continue to earn a living for me as long as He wants.

I know deep in my heart that if I would have continued to live for myself and would not have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, that I would be destined to spend eternity in hell. Jesus gives me the best life now and the best life to come. Thank You, Lord!!!

For the past year, I have changed from being an over the road driver to a regional driver. I am still leased on with the same company. I have a dedicated run in five states now that gets me home to Minneapolis every weekend while still paying me a very good income. Thank You, Lord!!!

I am 62 years old and hope to someday come off the road, but I will wait for God to move me. I will stay out here and serve Him until He tells me otherwise. I pray for everyone living in a truck and moving freight around this great country of ours.

God bless you all, and stay safe out there.

Steve

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CHAPTER 27

“Free Gift”

Why am I here?

What is life about?

Is it possible to live just to die?

What good is financial success when we must die?

Many years ago, my wife and I settled down to raise a family. My wife met some great people at the church where we were married, and I believe this was the start of my receiving a “Free Gift.”

Over the years our family grew. We had four wonderful children, a fantastic marriage, financial success, and many good friends. Sounds good, doesn't it? Even though it was good, I had many questions.

Why am I here? What is life about? Is it possible to live just to die? What good is financial success when we must die? Why do it? Why even be here? Why do I feel so confused? What is the answer? Why, when I have so much, do I have a feeling of emptiness?

For 19 years, I strongly believed that my family was the only thing that mattered, and I set out to provide for my family with everything the world had to offer. Almost everything I did was geared towards providing for my family and the generations of family to come. During this period of time, I searched high and low, trying many things, to fill the emptiness or void I felt: playing softball with the guys and drinking after the games, playing racquetball and drinking after the games, buying campers, snowmobiles, new cars, houses, etc. I tried working extra hours to make more money, buying more worldly possessions, starting a business, investing in and buying real estate, etc., etc., etc. All of these things gave me a very short-lived pleasure or happiness that would not last! It would leave as quickly as it came.

Fortunately for my family, while I was providing for their worldly life, my wife, Carla, was building the foundation for our eternal life. I have always believed there was a God, and I would occasionally pray when things were so far out of my control that I could not fix them. A couple things come to mind - like when my daughter was only weeks old and we had to put her in the hospital, and I feared for her life; when my son lay in the hospital with a staph infection; and when my wife was very sick and had an infection in her blood system - the doctor told me that my wife only had a 50/50 chance of survival. The most recent time was when a friend called for our support when his father was ill. Carla helped our friend while I stayed home with the kids.

As I laid there in bed that morning, I told God that I felt my friend's father was still needed in this world and that there was much good he could do by teaching God's word to people like me that still needed help. I asked God to please save my friend's father and to give him the opportunity to help others like myself. In return, I promised to try to follow his path, starting with attending church that coming Sunday.

The following Sunday, I attended church with my wife. It was a very peaceful feeling. The people at church all seemed so happy and full of life that it made me want to return the next Sunday. As the service was ending on my second visit, I felt very relaxed and was in no hurry to leave. After searching for the answers to my earlier questions, I came to the conclusion that we could not possibly live just to die. There was no other answer or reasoning to my problems and questions other than believing in God and having enough faith to accept His Son Jesus Christ in my life, so I did!

The love I saw in all the people "hit me." It was like nothing else I have ever felt in my life. At that time, I was not sure if it was Jesus filling the empty place in my heart or just all the love of the people reaching me. Whatever it was, I hoped it would never stop.

Looking back, I know that the Lord was with me every step of the way. The path He was leading me down was to teach me about the values of the world and temporary happiness versus complete and total joy and the values of the Lord. The Lord blessed me and my family by enabling us to make the right decisions in regard to my investments. I

have always based my decisions on what I called my “gut feeling,” but now I know it was my inner spirit leading me to worldly prosperity so that I would someday be able to testify that the things of the world are temporary and that worldly happiness will slip away very quickly. Even though I was blessed with prosperity before being blessed as a Christian, being a Christian means more to me than anything the world has to offer.

If you have any of the questions or problems I had, don't try to weather the storm on your own. Come in out of the rain, and let the Son of God, Jesus, meet your every need. Let Him lead you and guide you, through the Holy Spirit, from now to eternity. Since the writing of this testimony, the empty place in my heart has been filled with the Love of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God our Father.

In 1990 I had to quit my job of almost 20 years due to a rare blood disease. The doctors did not know what caused it and said they could do nothing for me. In January of 1994 the Lord told me He was going to heal me of that rare blood disease. In March of 1994, I took the same blood test that had led to the diagnosis that I had the rare disease. This time the results were negative! My blood had been cleansed by the Blood of My Savior. By His stripes, I was healed. Praise God! God can meet your every need and will if you do your part. I urge you to read God's word daily, pray daily, and praise the Lord's name daily.

“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7

Receive the “FREE GIFT!

God Bless You:

Jim Barbarossa

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Porter, Indiana

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What Do I Do Now?

1. Get a Bible, and read it every day. (Start in the New Testament.)
2. Find a church, and attend every time the doors are open.
3. Attend Bible studies and other Christ-centered meetings.
4. Pray every day – morning, noon, and night.
5. Tell people what Jesus has done for you.
6. Write out your Real Life Story, your testimony, and give it to people.
7. Make a public profession of your faith by being baptized in water.
8. Shout. Yes, Shout! Friend, you have something to shout about. You've been set free. Death cannot hold you, and Hell can't have you. You belong to God. No matter what happens in this life, as long as you continue to walk with Him, you will be with Him in Heaven.

Church Outreach

Every member in every local church has a real life story (a testimony). One of the most effective ways to teach Christians how to share their faith is to get them to write out their testimony (real life story) and share it as part of their everyday lifestyle. Step By Step Ministry worldwide award winning evangelism teachings are available on DVD and cover the topic of sharing your testimony plus many, many more effective ways to witness. For more information and resources about witnessing call, write, or email:

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Published By

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- I rededicated my life to Jesus today!
- I would like you to pray for me.

Discipleship

Do Real Life Stories Testimony Books help in the making of a disciple?

It is very hard to disciple people in this day and age because it takes time and commitment. Jesus disciplined people for 2 or 3 years. There is no way we can get people to make that kind of commitment today. To be able to disciple someone, you must get some kind of a commitment from them. We have found that if you can get a Christian to commit to write out their testimony and share it daily, this commitment sets the stage for the Holy Spirit to disciple them!

The first thing we challenge people to do in our 12-part discipleship teaching series is to commit to writing their testimony and being a part of a Real Life Stories Christian Testimony Book.

The second thing we do is challenge people to carry two copies of the Real Life Stories Christian Testimony in their hand every time they leave their home and every time they get out of their car.

The third thing we do is challenge them to ask the Holy Spirit to help them in the giving away of the books!

The commitment to carry the books, joined with the commitment to ask the Holy Spirit to help them, sets the stage for the Holy Spirit to be active in their life! If a person is always carrying the Gospel message with them in the form of a Real Life Stories Christian Testimony Book, they are always trusting in the Holy Spirit to help them! This gives the Holy Spirit total access to all their Time and Daily Life!

What we accomplish during our 12 Discipleship Sessions is getting a strong commitment from the person being disciplined to allow the Holy Spirit to led them into Living a Witnessing Lifestyle!

Want more information on how you can start a Discipleship Gathering in Your City? Send an email to Jim@step-by-step.org with the words “Discipleship Gathering” in the subject line.

You can call or text Jim Barbarossa at 219-762-7589.

You can write to:

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Real Life Stories Trucker's Edition 2 ONE MILLION BOOK PROJECT!

Our Hope, with God's help, is to produce 1 Million Copies of our next book with the Testimonies of Christian Truck Drivers and Freely Give them away at Truck Stops across North America over the next 10 years. We are looking for 30 Christian Truck Drivers that will write their testimonies and submit them to be used for God's Glory in our next book, "Real Life Stories Trucker's Edition 2." For complete details of how to submit your story and your needed Financial commitment to be a part of this book project, please contact us below.

If you see Value in this book and would like to get involved in using them in your area, please contact us below.

If you would like to help Fund, the One Million Book Project with your Donation, keep in mind, that for every \$100 given, we are able to Freely Give Away 280 books in Truck Stops all over North America! To make your donation, contact us below.

Real Life Stories Trucker's Edition 1

Jim Barbarossa

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New Book Project – Real Life Stories Biker's Edition 1:

Now accepting testimonies for our New Book, featuring the stories of Born Again Bikers! For more information call, text, or email Jim at: (219) 762-7589 · jim@step-by-step.org