

The Destructive Power Of Secrets

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

MERCY

Divine goodness exercised towards the wretched and the guilty, in harmony with truth and justice, **Psalms 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.** The plan, by which God is enabled to show saving mercy to men (for Christ's sake) is the most consummate work of infinite wisdom and love. The soul that has truly experienced the mercy of God will be merciful like him, **Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.** compassionate to the wretched, **Psalms 41:1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.** and forgiving towards all, **Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

Matthew 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

(American Tract Society Dictionary)

This booklet is provided free to inmates to help reveal the need of a Saviour (Jesus Christ) in one's life. An individuals struggles to keep the past quiet can bring about a pattern of self-destructive behavior.

Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

This is a personal testimony about how keeping secrets almost destroyed someone from the inside out.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

By trying to deal with spiritual problems of past actions with human strength and understanding (without the power of God the Almighty) the hole just got deeper and deeper.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

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Introduction

This is a personal testimony about how an event in my life, that I thought was out of my control, led me to a shallow, hollow, nowhere life. The lack of spiritual discernment left me with no insight into what should have been correct choices. As a result, I ran and hid in a life of drugs, rehabs, psych wards and took a various array of other avenues to help deal with memories that I thought would never go away. What I thought didn't bother me at the time would eventually come back and haunt me in my dreams to the point that I started having outbursts in my daily life. As my personal tormented world inside my head got worse so did the ways I tried to deal with it. My world consisted in a life cycle of destructive behavior followed by crippled attempts of repair that lead only to more self inflicted destruction and feeble reaches for help intermingled with denial and self pity.

When my dreams got to the point that I didn't want to go to sleep, I sought the help of psychiatric facilities. They only brought about more medications for a mental illness that only required that the truth be brought out. Not wanting to be honest, I kept looking for that emotional band aid I was convinced was out there. Coupling prescription medication with hard street drugs, my personality changed into something that not only did no one know how to handle but, I became a stranger to myself. The downhill spiral brought me to my knees more than once but each time when I looked up all I saw was God. He was the last thing I wanted to see. This holy roller stuff wasn't going to get me. The last thing I wanted was to walk around the planet with a plastic smile on my face saying praise the Lord. Not this kid, are you crazy? I'm a stone cold killer. What will people think?

Some how, in my drug induced steeper, I thought that there was a more Hellish life outside of my own and God was going to make me give up what I had for that life. When I look back on things now, I see how Satan had gotten me to believe a lie, several lies in fact.

Some of you in jail and prison will be able to relate all to well, but then again that's why you're there. This story is in no way meant to glorify sin. It is presented with honesty, to point out the

destructive-ness of a lifestyle to many live in, in what has become an anything goes society.

I pray that my testimony can be used by my Lord and Saviour to bring hope to those in similar situations. Please keep in mind that the promise of salvation is only available while we are alive in the flesh. Once our physical bodies die we no longer have the chance of eternal life. The Bible tells us of a promised judgment after we die. **Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:.** It talks about two different judgments concerning men's souls.

1) Judgement for those that have confessed that they were a sinner, repented of their sin nature, ask Jesus Christ to come into their life and save them. This group of people have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and will stand before God at the Judgment seat of Christ to see if what they have done after salvation glorified God or not. Their judgment will determine blessings, rewards, crowns, and determine whether or not they shall receive a full reward.

2) The second judgment, called the White Throne Judgment, is for those who have rejected what Jesus Christ did on Calvary, His righteousness and try to get into Heaven based on their own righteousness . This group will be judged to determine the extent of the wrath of God that will abide on their soul for all eternity.

You see just as Jesus Christ's payment for sin for those who accept it is eternal so is the payment one must pay if he wishes to pay for his own sin. When you reject Jesus Christ you are telling Him you want to pay for your own sins. Why would anyone want to do that? You are saying you believe that you can be good enough to satisfy a holy, righteous, and just God. Are you sure? While you read this booklet I want you to ask yourself which judgment you will be at.

Again this story is how one lost soul found forgiveness and a peace with God that has made the trip worth while and I wish to share some of the promises of the scriptures that I now enjoy.

The Set Up

In the summer of 1980, I got in a fight outside some guy's house I was partying at, ended up in front of a judge for aggravated assault. I got sentenced to sixty days in jail. I was always looking for a way out of stuff and had already contacted the United States Marine Corp recruiters office. I was also looking for a way out of my home life. This was just another reason to join. I asked the judge if he'd let me join instead of going to jail. He said I would come out worse than when I went in if I even made it through boot camp. That kind of talk only made me more determined to join.

The Military had just stopped taking people as an alternative to incarceration, so I had to apply for four wavier's. Fortunately most of the Marines that had to approve my application had joined that way so they thought nothing of helping me. Besides, when they saw my charges were a result of drinking and fighting, they said I would make a fine Marine.

I got to boot camp and couldn't believe what was going on. I had heard stories all my life, but I thought that type of treatment of Recruits had been stopped because of Congressional Inquiries after some recruits died during training. Little did I know when I enlisted that nothing had changed. Paris Island was as harsh and unforgiving as the Jar Heads that ran it. It wasn't intended to be a picnic. It was, however, intended to weed out those that weren't going to measure up and they had a limited time to do this. Thirteen weeks seemed like a life time to the recruits but to the Drill Instructors it was a very short time to decide who wouldn't make it in the Fleet Marine Force physically or mentally. As I found out later, Boot Camp was only a preview of things to come. There were places on this planet more vile and stressful than a little island of the coast of South Carolina.

First you need to understand some of my back ground. I grew up on a farm in Wayne County in upstate New York. I had no preparation for all the types of violence I was running into. I got in two

or three fights in boot camp and was around many more. It was the first time I saw someone get hurt so bad they didn't recover right physically. These things seem so petty with the extreme violence of today's society, but back then even knife fights were rare except in the city newspapers. Even rarer was a shooting. For those of you that are too young to remember, a lot of the violence that is accepted in today's life style didn't really emerge until Crack came on the scene sometime between 1981-83 depending what part of the country you lived in. I wasn't exposed to that until I got released from the Corp in 1984.

When I left boot camp, I was excited to get orders to Camp Lejeune. The Drill Instructors took all the guys that got orders to Camp Lejeune and gave us a "get serious talk". They told us that even though it was the largest Military Base in the world it was also known for having the most homicides of any military installation, foreign or domestic. They advised us not to check in alone, go out in town alone and never use the back gate at night. What really struck me odd was the serious looks on their faces. Boot camp was over, the scare tactics should have stopped. I got a very bad feeling these guys really were just trying to give us an honest warning, but how bad could this place really be. I couldn't understand how dangerous a U.S. Military Installation was.

Before I was sent to Camp Lejeune, I went next door to Camp Johnson for Auto Mechanics School. Because of all the trouble out in town there were curfews and restrictions on everything we did there. We couldn't even walk around camp with out a chit giving us permission. So I didn't really get a feel for what was going on. They didn't want to give anyone a chance to screw up and not graduate. After Motor Transport School, I was sent to my first Duty Station, Camp Lejeune North Carolina. On the way to camp we passed by a car that apparently had caught on fire. The driver told us that there were three black males that had had car trouble or something and some white guys had thrown a Molotov cocktail at them and burned the car up. Now you need to know this was on base. This did not reflect how bad it was out in town.

After two days of checking in, I reported to the Motor Pool for work. This was my first official day of work in the Marine Corp. As soon as I got there, I was told to report to the Motor Pool next door and see if they needed help with the bodies. I'm like "what

bodies”)? They told me they found the bodies of two white Marines in the back of two different deuce n a half's that morning. I had to ask one of the other guys what was going on because I was so naive. I still didn't get it. I had walked into a full blown race war. People were keeping score and killing guys on the other side for points. He explained to me that it wasn't safe to be any ware on or off base alone. Even groups of two wouldn't guarantee your safety.

I heard other stories about guys that didn't handle the break up with their girlfriends well. One man went off and killed seven or eight people in the court yard than went in and called her on the phone and when she answered he blew his brains out. Stuff like that was apparently going on regularly. When I was there, one guy in the barracks next to us killed his roommate because he threw a cigarette pack on the floor of their room right before inspection and wouldn't pick it up. They found him a week later in the back of his own car when people complained of the smell. One of my roommates and myself had a guy try to break in one night and as he held him I cracked the side of his head open with an aluminum bar. I hit him so hard it put a six to eight inch gash down the side of his head and face. We weren't supposed to have weapons but I was already starting to get the picture of how to survive in this place. The bar was kept between my mattress and bed frame. When I picked it out, I thought it was heavy enough to do any job. After I had hit the guy, it only dazed him and the bar was bent beyond belief. The M.P.'s came and took him away after they beat him for what seemed like forever. We found out he was on some kind of amphetamines and alcohol and couldn't feel a thing.

It didn't take long before I was catching on to this violence stuff pretty good. There were certain people that were committed to watching out for each other. It became a habit not to go certain places even with people. There were short cuts through the woods you could only use safely during the daytime; and others were always a risk. Camp Lejeune is big and every one uses short cuts. Some of the most violent cases were along the lonely stretches of road that went on for miles. It was quite common, after a rain, for body parts to was out of the sand. It also got to be a habit that we would keep knives on one of the trails going out and coming in from town so we wouldn't get caught with weapons in the barracks. We would just pick them up when we needed them.

I got caught out one night by myself after I had gone shopping and started drinking. I chose to drink instead of using common-sense; I was alone and it got dark. I didn't have a knife with me because I thought I'd be back before dark. One guy with his girl friend asked me for a light, and when I turned around some guys clocked me from behind and started kicking me. They didn't get any thing but it did put my arm in a sling for a couple of weeks. It also got me picked up by the Military Police, when they saw me running down the street with blood coming out of my face. They escorted me back to base and logged it in as an incident. I didn't get in trouble, but I had to explain what happened to the First Sergeant the next day. After that I never went anywhere without a knife.

One night we got off work and everyone got ready to go to town to get drunk and laid. Most of all the guys wanted to go to Court Street. That's where the main strip was. Nothing but topless bars, tattoo shops, prostitutes, and hustlers up one side of the street and down the other. Since that was where I got jumped, I really didn't care to go there right away again, but all the guys wanted to go where the action was. There was only one other guy that wanted to drink and not have to worry about getting in a beef. We didn't know each other but who cared. We went right out in front of Camp Lejeune along the highway. There wasn't much there but some old rundown topless country bars. I thought I could trade music for safety, besides, how bad could a southern hillbilly red-neck bar be? We weren't there for an hour and had it figured for a locals only bar. There were some Jar heads there but not a lot and none from up North. I got the impression it wasn't the type of bar you dared to get drunk in. The guy I was with said it was alright with him if we left. We were definitely thinking the same thing. When we had walked in earlier there weren't many people there. We sat all the way off to the side toward the back and I kept my back to the wall. The place had filled up fast and there was a large crowd to get through to leave. We were ready to book and some guys came in and started giving this other guy a hard time. We decided to leave while everyone's attention was on the six or seven men arguing with the single man. We walked around them and out the door and the man that was alone decided to follow us out. I

don't know if he thought they wouldn't hurt him outside if we were around, or if he just wanted to get out and try to get away.

Once out side everything changed. It appeared these guys jumped this guy from behind as he tried to get away from them. He didn't have a chance. They were smoking him. He went down after only the second or third direct unblocked punch to the back and side of the head. They didn't stop there. They circled around and starting kicking and beating him until he couldn't hold his head up anymore. We turned around to walk away but all I could hear was these guys cursing, yelling and this guy getting dusted. It was obvious to me, they weren't going to be happy just putting this guy in the hospital. The memories of this whole Camp Lejeune experience ran through my head; the bodies, the race war, then getting jumped and being alone. I thought of how I wished there was someone to help me when I needed it. I looked at the other marine with me and said I can't watch this anymore. He said, "I'm with you, what ever you do, I'm with you". I said, "I'm running right up the middle and try to take out the biggest dude". I just asked him to hang back and make sure they didn't get me from behind as I reached in my boot and got my knife.

The knife was a lock blade, I had bought it at a pawn shop on Court Street one night when I was leaving earlier than the guys I was with. I wanted it for the trip back to base. I had decided to keep it on me all the time after I had been jumped. It wasn't anything special, a lock blade just a little longer than the legal length of three and a half inches for a Marine to carry off base. It was all I dared to carry if I got caught, but I thought it was enough to do the job if it was required.

I had no knife training other than boot camp. They taught us to kill people there. Mostly how to take out sentry's and trench warfare with our bayonet; fighting with it on the end of our rifles and stuff like that. This wasn't any of those situations. All that kept running through my mind as I approached them was maybe they would stop before I got there and we could all go home. That didn't happen. When it came decision time, I just ran past a couple of the guys that had stepped back and were watching, and on toward the biggest most aggressive guy still kicking the man on the ground. I stabbed him one time up under his heart in the lungs. I didn't want to kill him but I knew if I got involved, with the odds

the way they were, I had to drop everyone I came in contact with. I couldn't afford to get in a toe to toe fight. As aggressive as they were, I couldn't afford to just stab somebody lightly and only make them more violent. I had to do enough to take the fight out of them. That's what happened. The guy I stabbed just dropped straight down. I ran past him through the group and when I turned around to come back through again the rest started to go in different directions. When I ran back through the middle to where my friend was no one was there to attack me they had all backed away. We just kept on going. I thought it was over, but that was only the beginning. We ran back to the base and thought I was alright because neither one of us had ever been to that bar before. We never told anyone our names so no one knew us. We just wouldn't ever go back.

Reality

The next work day, we were standing around the Motor Pool like nothing happened. We heard about a Marine from the Motor Pool next to us that got arrested for stabbing a guy in town and killing him. A cold, cold chill went down my back and I didn't feel well. I didn't feel well at all! I got really nervous and I don't know what else. It was different, not what I expected. What did I expect anyway. I stabbed a guy outside a bar at night after I had been drinking. There weren't that many different outcomes possible.

According to the rumor mill, what happened was, a Marine from the unit next door was involved in an altercation in town where a man got stabbed. When the police tried to get the names of the other men with him, whom they believed did the killing, he claimed he didn't know them. The police charged him because they thought he was lying, protecting someone and thus somehow involved. One of the many things I didn't think of was that when we left the scene, the man that was first attacked couldn't get away. With us gone, the only witnesses left were the guys that started it. There was no way they were going to tell the truth. The whole purpose of getting involved was to help. It appeared the man we tried to help lived but got charged with killing someone in the process.

After talking it over with the Marine that was with me, we decided to tell our First Sergeant or Company Gunny. I can't even remember his proper title. I wasn't looking forward to standing tall in front of this man. I had not been in the unit long enough to know him very well. What I did know was that, he had a rough military past and was a hard charger. He had spent multiple tours in Vietnam. You could see the outline of his gas mask around his face and neck from the various chemicals he was exposed to. There were also patches on his arms that didn't want to heal right. They would break out from time to time as he did his best to keep them covered. I didn't know it at the time but his attitude that no one or nothing could kill him, was consistent with some of the best

leaders by example I was going to run across in my tour of service. This can do attitude was a valuable tool in surviving the Marine Corp and in life. There was always a way. One of the sayings in the Corp was “We’ve done so much for so long with so little we can do anything with nothing”.

When we knocked on the door and requested permission to speak, the looks on our faces must have told him it was serious because he sent everyone else out of the office. Each one of us told him what we understood to be the chain of events and I must say, our stories were almost identical. The marine with me stood up for what I thought was right outside the bar, but I wasn’t sure how far he would go to admit his involvement by being there. He was a stand up guy and was in this thing all the way no matter what the outcome.

I must take a minute to explain that after spending four years in the Corp, the response he gave was in line with what I would have done if I was in charge. The good of the Corp is how decisions are made not on individual concerns. Unit cohesion is most important to carry out the unit mission and that is done by protecting your own and keeping morale as high as possible. If a unit commander or one of his people in a leadership position screw his men they will turn on him and look for every opportunity for pay back. Also, if the situation gets out of hand enough he will lose respect from his own Commanding Officers all the way to Washington . None of which is good for any military Career. SEMPER FIDELIS- means always Faithful

It didn’t take him a total of five seconds to give an answer to the problem. It was almost like he had one ready. The first thing I remember him saying was don’t tell anyone else, that's an order. He made a phone call and determined that the civilian police had the other Marine in custody (whether at the hospital or in jail I don’t know). He looked at me and said, they already have one of our men. If you step forward they will have all three of you.

The civilian and military police have had a long and strained relationship. The history of them working together was they didn’t. It wasn’t uncommon for Marines, that got busted off base, to get seriously hurt after they were in custody. They wanted to send a message that the behavior Marines displayed off base not only

wasn't welcome but wouldn't be tolerated. What seemed to irritate the civilian police most was when the Marine Corp would go to bat for someone. They'd ask them to release them in their custody promising to make sure he or she would be in court and then transfer them out of state or overseas so they couldn't be prosecuted. Needless to say; anyone that got busted out in town for anything serious didn't get released, and then faced additional charges from the Corp for unauthorized absence or desertion, depending on how long they were gone. This was on top of the civilian charges.

We were both told to go back to work and he would take care of it. We had no idea what he had in mind until the next day. Each of us got orders to different places. They had us checked out and off base in no time.

It seemed a great relief not to get in trouble with the Marine Corp but inside that didn't solve anything. I still believed I killed someone and another guy was accused of it. The guys that were guilty would probably not get caught because no one but the accused was pointing a finger at them. It just didn't seem right. I had really made a mess, as usual.

Guilt

I got on with my life, finished my enlistment and some how thought I was alright. After all what did I care I didn't even know the guy.

So what, even if he got convicted, at least he was alive. He should thank me. Let me tell you something, this homicidal, hard core baby killer attitude didn't fit me well. Listen I understand that the military has a job to do and training people to kill is part of that job. To separate the ones that display a mental attitude incompatible with the training to take human life from the ones that act just short of enjoying it is a fine line they need to walk. They don't want to create homicidal maniacs that won't know enough to stop after a conflict when they return to civilian life or will turn on commanding officers because they don't like their orders.

For me, I actually had a desire to be some hard core war veteran. I wanted to be old enough to have gone to Vietnam. I wanted to experience combat, both sides, shooting and being shot at. As usual, the visions in our head's don't match what really takes place in life. What I thought it would be like to kill someone wasn't the way it turned out. I couldn't even tell or talk to anybody about this. I wasn't clear if it was the right thing to do. I could have walked away and let the guy die if it was meant to be.

There were a couple other violent situations that ended bad as I will explain later in the booklet. I don't have permission from the military to discuss everything I did or even to talk about every place I went in the military. I'm not trying to insinuate I did any I-spy stuff but there are many Military operations that go on through the world, peace time and war time, that soldiers, Marines, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard personal are sworn to secrecy. Unless the Government declassifies something, even our memories belong to Uncle Sam. Besides, I'm not blaming the Government

for anything I did or the mental state I ended up in because, I enlisted on my own. I wanted to be a Marine.

If you remember, in the beginning of this booklet, I said I got arrested for drinking and was picked up on an assault charge, I was also drinking the night I stabbed that guy. So, it shouldn't surprise you that my chosen way to cope with the stress in my head was alcohol.

After a while, alcohol didn't work any more. I screwed around with crack after I got out of the Marine Corp, but that didn't work well enough to keep me from trying Heroin. Now Heroin, that worked for a long time. I thought I had found a wonder drug. Why didn't more people use this stuff? It was awesome! At least until I got hooked, which took about two weeks.

I used Heroin and Cocaine for several years when I worked for the Post Office. Then I got busted on the job, twice, about one year apart. I had a \$300-\$500 a day habit for about the last seventeen months I was free. I was working at the Post Office when I showed up, selling Coke, Heroin, plus growing and selling Skunk weed and I still had to steal from time to time to supplement my income. When they caught up with me I had a twenty to thirty bag a day habit for Heroin alone. I have been told that most people don't live long enough to get a habit like that but because I was getting uncut Heroin I had what they call a dealers habit. It was when I ran out and I had to buy the regular junk on the streets that I would buy 2-3 bundles a day to keep off sick. For those of you that don't know a bundle is 10 bags. A brick is 5 ten bag bundles. If you buy your uncut Heroin in what is called an egg there is no comparison in regards to the purity in a normal street bag. I had such a habit that I had overdosed seven times that required hospitalization. Four times I stopped breathing and three times I stopped breathing and my heart stopped. I had a counselor tell me that I had such a habit she thought that I had to get close to overdosing before by body could feel it.

With all that said, I still had night mares and dreams from the violence in the past. Not even all those drugs would kill the memories. I got to the point where the only alternative, I could come up with, was suicide. Now, this wasn't the first time in my life I thought about this topic but up to this point it was the closest I got

to doing anything about it. I was going from the thought stage to the planning stage. There were just a few details that had to be worked out yet but the decision had been made. I wasn't afraid to make a mess out of my life any more because I thought I could resolve any situation just by checking out.

Federal Prison

I was placed on federal probation for wilful destruction of Government property after I broke out of a psychiatric ward in the Canandaigua Veterans Administration where I was detoxing from Heroin. I violated right away, which is probably what saved my life. When I went before the Judge, he said, “no bail no bond”, and gave me six months in a Federal psychiatric prison for an evaluation. This was to determine if I needed an involuntary commitment to protect myself or society, until I got my head on straight. This was all based on the plea agreement prior to being put on Probation and the recommendation of my P.O. Somehow my Probation Officer got the idea I was homicidal and suicidal. He said I lived like I didn’t care about myself or those around me. He got the impression I didn’t care if I woke up in the morning and that made me dangerous. I wonder if he had to go to collage for six years to figure that one out, or how many graphs, charts and formulas he had to use to come to that conclusion.

The Fed’s are very efficient. First I had to go to Otisville New York, then El Reno Oklahoma, next Atlanta Fed. Pen. From Georgia, I was sent to F.C.I. Butner, North Carolina just a few hours drive away from Otisville. Their flight route, at that time, only went counter clockwise around the United States. It put me in some prisons I normally wouldn’t have been exposed to. They must have figured how it would look on my resume, just in case, I decided to make crime my profession and lived long enough to get caught again. I know, they were just looking out for my best interest, but I would have had more fun if they lowered my classification first. See having on my papers that I escaped from another Federal Facility didn’t look good, even if it was just a lock down ward at a V.A. Hospital.

There were only three Federal Psychiatric prisons in the United States at the time of my incarceration. One was in Rochester, Minnesota, another in Butner, North Carolina, and the other was not

listed on the Federal prison's list. I asked two different guards about it and they both told me it wasn't public information and those that went there never got released.

Anyway I got to Butner and I had to be put in what they call "Seclusion" until I got cleared by Medical and Security. The medical clearance came in the form of a Psychiatrist evaluation and they only lowered your classification one level at a time.

They put me in a cell with this guy that had been there for over a year. To start with the only time he took a shower was when the smell bothered the guards enough to make him. He was so brain damaged, this place was his home indefinitely. I thought he was on some far out medication or something, but they never gave him any. The guards said he was always like that. Now this was the cell with the cameras and a window into the guards office. I knew why I was there, but had no idea what his problem was. He never talked, but he would make sounds once in a while. You have to understand what this place was like. It stunk so bad that I quickly learned not to inhale when I ate so I wouldn't gag. The head bangers and screamers wouldn't shut up until they got their Thorazine shots. For days at a time, they would scream, non stop. They would put the more violent ones in four point restraints and give them injections of Thorazine to calm them down. This worked well for about one to one and a half days. Then, as they came out of it, they would start acting up but they wanted to wait at least three days before they would give them another treatment. That was the facility policy unless they were an immediate threat. They tried to gauge it so all the screamers would get there shots on the same days so they had some peace and quiet. It didn't seem to work very well.

I had noticed what looked like laundry detergent on the floor when I first got there. About the second or third day, I went to use the toilet for the first time since I got there. As I went to wipe it off real well I saw more of this flaky soap powder substance on the toilet rim but I couldn't figure out how it got there, if it was indeed laundry soap. I ignored it and took care of business. So awhile later, when I went to use it again, there was more of this whitish gray stuff again and I knew nobody had done laundry since I had been there. So I kept an eye on my cell mate when he got up to take a leak again.

I could hear him scratching himself and it wasn't long before I realized what was all over the floor and toilet was dead nasty skin flakes from off this guy's body.

The next day, one of the guards asked me how the smell was when he saw me breathing through my shirt. They said they would make him take a shower again. The problem was he wouldn't use the soap they gave him or scrub in any way, and there was nothing they could do about that. That afternoon, when the guards took him out for his shower, I couldn't help notice how black his sheets and pillow case were. His pillow case was so shiny it was like wax off a candle had dripped on it. I'm looking at how this guy was living and thinking that it was so sad when I saw rice in the bed. Now there had not been any rice served since I had been there, so, I was thinking about saying something to the guard about making him change his sheets. I got up to see because I didn't want to be wrong, and when I got close enough I could see the rice had black heads and moving. They were maggots. This guy had such amounts of filth in his bed the flies could lay eggs. I started gagging and ran back to my bunk. I didn't know there were places like this in the United States.

I told you these stories to let you know where I was in life when I accepted Jesus Christ and why, if you're locked up, you are getting this booklet for free. This was my spiritual breaking point. If Hell was anything like my life was at this point I didn't want any part of it and I knew Hell was going to be worse and I couldn't imagine spending eternity there. I got on my knees on my bunk and asked Jesus Christ to come into my life and be my Lord and Saviour. I wasn't sure how this God thing worked, but I knew I had to find out. I made a promise to God, that if he would get me out of there and show me how to live, I would do it. In fact I went a little farther and told him I would live for Him and go into the ministry full time if he could make it possible for me to completely change my life around.

I know now that I had made what the Bible calls "A vow": **Numbers 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.** And: **Deuteronomy 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD**

thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. I had no idea exactly what I had done, nor did I really care. My situation was so bad, I was willing to do what ever it took to get out of it. I believed that meant calling on God, the Almighty. Remember these next two verses for the following chapter. **Ecclesiastes 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.** And: **Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** I also know that God had accepted my vow because he didn't let me live the way I used to without much more severe consequences. The Bible tells me God chastens His children whom He loves: **Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.** So, I must have been one of His children for the next few years to be the way they were. I will go into this later and you will see these verses held true in my life. God didn't cut me any slack after I knew better. I was now an adopted child of God and He expected me to act like one. God was going to correct my problems as only He could do and He was going to start on my attitude first.

Release / Relapse

The Doctors decided to release me after the six months. No paper, I served the full six months, and went home. When I saw the Detainer Action Letter with NO HOLDS CASE DISPOSED written across the bottom, I was so excited. The Feds. sentenced me so fast, I didn't get to take care of all the other local cases back home. The judges involved, back in N.Y., agreed to let my Federal time satisfy their charges.

First of all, I had been reading my Bible and praying in Prison based on the understanding I had at the time. I prayed in the morning and at night before I went to bed. Sometimes, I would read the Bible after breakfast and then set it down for the day. There were days I really wanted to read more, but I was really just reading it like a book and had no understanding of how to study or even what the difference was between reading and studying.

When I got out of Prison, one of the first things I wanted to do was carry out the promises I had made to God. I was so clueless as to how to change when I look back now, I can't believe how foolish I was. I even drank on the airplane ride home from Prison. I still smoked cigarettes and had no intentions of giving them up. You see I got involved in the first Church I ran into and that's the way some of the people in that Church were living so I thought it was ok. I have since then found a verse in the Bible about comparing ourselves amongst ourselves: **2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.** I also got involved in a 12 step program and started giving that program praise for getting and keeping me off drugs. Yes, I know alcohol is a drug but after smoking crack and shooting Heroin for so long, alcohol was easy to stop. They asked me to give some testimonies at a couple of meetings for troubled children. The more I spoke for these organizations the less

glory I gave to the Lord, and as a result, the less authority God had in my life. I want to take a minute out of the story to make a Biblical point.

God the Almighty is a jealous God: **Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:**

Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Now when I started going around speaking on behalf of these groups I wasn't giving the Honor and Glory to God the Father through God the Son where it belonged: **2 Peter 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** As a result, I was on my own with these organizations to overcome temptations. I gave up God's help when I started giving a human organization credit for what God was doing in my life.

The Bible also says that a saved child of God is to pick up his cross and follow the Lord: **Luke 9:23-26 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.** No where in the Bible does it tell us to follow some man made, self help, self promoting, godless organization.

Following the way the congregation in that particular church was living and giving credit to a twelve step program was not following Christ. As I look back now, I can see how the power to overcome my drug addiction wasn't even addressed where I was looking. Calling my higher power a chair and going to a church where people claimed they were saved but still lived in the world wasn't going to lead me to a greater relationship with the Lord. In fact, I

back slid in my addiction and all areas of my life like I never experienced before.

Now, I made several mistakes, like leaving one church before I had a new one to go to. I didn't redeem the time I had in Prison to prepare me for my release date as much as I could have. I should have been much more involved in my future with the Lord. Reading the Bible, correspondence courses, Bible Commentaries or any other material to get me indoctrinated in the Word of God and how to apply it in my life. If I had a greater understanding of the Word of God I would not have gotten involved in the church that I did. I would have seen that it was not Christ centered. The last fatal mistake I made was concerning something the Lord had been dealing with me on ever since it happened. You probably guessed it by now, it was that stabbing back in North Carolina. For me to carry out the promises that I made to God back then, I could not have a secret like that in my past. Some how, I didn't have enough faith to come clean on something that serious. I wanted to be forgiven for my sins, and accept Christ's payment for sin, so I wouldn't have to be held accountable on judgment day but I didn't have enough faith to pass my first major trial or test concerning my faith. So, I didn't do a thing. Sure I talked to the pastor and a couple of inexperienced elders of the church and they told me a bunch of unscriptural bull. The Bible clearly tells us that God reveals secrets: **Daniel 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;**

Daniel 2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

The Bible also warns us about people that try to keep secrets: **Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.**

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil. Now I know that several good men of God teach that everything is under the blood and that is correct concerning God and forgiveness of sins. That in no wise deals with our relation to our fellow man. I and many others believe that restitution is part of re-

penitance. I don't believe that we can be right with God and get over on other people or not right past wrongs when possible. We are to have a good testimony with both God and mankind: **1 Thessalonians 5:22-23 Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Now, I can't mention any people by name but unless you live under a bridge you see it all the time. Guys get caught ten, twenty, even thirty years later for a crime they committed. They're usually honest about it after they get caught. They pled their case to a judge, most often after they get extradited back to the original state. Usually, you see his wife and pastor standing there testifying before the jury about a crime they want leniency for or forgotten altogether because he is a changed man. I've got a couple of questions about that. If the guy had really changed, why didn't he go back and clear it up? If he's so changed, then why has he been living a lie for so long, before his wife, children, usually even his pastor? The Bible says even to pretend to be holier than you really are is a sin. How honest is being honest in telling the truth after you get caught lying? Even a new Christian like myself knew, God couldn't use someone like me in the ministry if I didn't come clean on this incident.

There are already enough ungodly men in the ministry that God has to deal with. If you look at how God deals with pastors, ministers, and so forth, it's not pretty. It's usually very public and very messy. But in every major scandal I've seen in the news the man had years to get right and chose not to. Some of them, even kept practicing that same destructive sin no different than some junky hiding in the darkness of an ally way, thinking no one will find out. In fact, God makes it clear about how elders and bishops should conduct themselves: **Titus 1:5-9 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just,**

holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Also how they shouldn't be: **Titus 1:10-16 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.**

There are even scriptures for the basic Christian, (that was me , I just wanted in on the basic plan, nothing tough) : **Titus 2:11-15 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.**

This stuff was making me feel guilty, because I was. I didn't want to hear anymore. I knew I wasn't right with God or man. Then it says: **Titus 3:1-2 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.** I knew that principalities, powers, and magistrates somehow meant mans' law or something. Then He talks about the way we were and how He expects us to be: **Titus 3:3-8 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after**

that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.* It was obvious to me I wasn't in the category I should have been. If I had to turn myself in, to grow in the Lord I was staying right where I was. When I told God I wanted His help getting my life together, I never thought about the fact that he might ask me to do some crazy thing like get right with man's laws or something else I didn't want to do. I just wanted forgiveness, and then to move on with my life. I had not come to the understanding that when you give your life to God, it's not yours anymore. It never dawned on me, if I wanted to change, I couldn't keep any of my old self and please the Lord.

I needed time to think about what the Bible said. Do you notice anything about that statement? I, I, I. I had gone to God for help in the first place. He let me try to live my life my way. I admitted defeat and asked Him for help. Now, I'm telling Him I want to do it my way again. I guess you know what I, in my self willed state, did next. I got high on Heroin.

I remember driving my car to an old spot to see if it was still open. During the drive, the Holy Spirit recalled all the different things I had talked over with God. About how he had given me a second chance and I wondered if He would get mad if I got high just once more. I just needed to take a break and think things over.

Well, I did and He was mad. He handed me over to the desires of my heart as never before for three years. I went into full blown addiction like I never experienced before in my life. It wasn't that God stopped loving me, but I picture Him saying, "Mark it wasn't my idea you disobeyed me and got entangled in the life you were saved from but as long as you did there are a few more lessons you need to learn; like obedience".

There are scriptures to cover that too: **2 Peter 2:20-22** **For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.** Oh yeah, this was me. A dog returning to his own vomit. How appealing, but that was exactly what I did. God wrote that scripture with guys like me in mind.

I haven't told you, but God was very good to me after I got out of prison. I had started my own business, which I had to close down. I had bought a Corvette, that was repossessed, and my mom got an order of protection against me all in about a month or so.

I ended up homeless, on Evergreen Street off North Clinton Avenue in Rochester, N.Y. at some run down dope house. When things got so bad I didn't think I could take it any longer, I ate a couple bottles of pills and booted two syringes full of uncut Heroin. I remember not wanting to talk to God, but He was the only one still in my life. I told Him I couldn't do it, and I was sorry. I didn't understand why some people made it and some ended up like me. I explained that I couldn't make it without Him in my life, and apparently, I couldn't make it with Him either. I didn't know why I was even created. I told Him, I just couldn't deal with it any more and I wanted to be with Him away from this world. I also made one last remark. I knew if it wasn't His will that I die, I wouldn't, and He'd have to come into my life and live it for me. When the pills started to kick in, I piggy backed the two syringes and ran the plungers home.

Well, I woke up the next morning with both needles still in my arm and very much alive. I didn't feel any effects of the drugs. I did feel the comfort of something I couldn't explain. I guess you will just have to have faith to believe what had happened to me: **Hebrews 11:1** **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

I didn't know it at the time but God had been waiting for me to tell Him I couldn't keep those promises and to ask Him to come into my life and keep them for me. All I had to do was get out of the way. You see, outside of the Almighty power of God there is no victory. I should have been able to see that, but after making promises I thought I had to keep them based on my efforts. That's not the way He works. Not on our human level: **Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.** I didn't have to do anything but believe and obey. That night and morning gave me a great confidence in God. By all human understanding I should have been dead. Any medical or science based calculations would have had me cold and stiff. The dope alone was so thick it wouldn't draw up in a single needle. That's why I had to delude it and use two. I knew if God could keep me from dying, He could keep me out of prison if He wanted to. In fact, it started to dawn on me, that God was the reason I wasn't there then. Besides, if God wanted me to be a preacher in prison I could serve Him that way just as well. It still took over a year to get back on my feet. Part of that meant, I had to clear up some other local crimes. I wanted to be a free unwanted member of society when I turned myself in to North Carolina. That way no cop could take credit for it and make it look like I got caught. I wanted people to know I was turning myself in because of my relationship the Jesus Christ, so He would get the glory. **Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

Starting Over: Again

I'm not going to cover all the times I tried to get right with God. I want to keep it somewhat focused on one main event. I had gone through several Rehabs and mental wards trying to get my life in order and they didn't work because God wasn't in them. There was no ultimate authority, as in Divine guidance, only emotional band aids and more human understanding that produced the same results. There are programs that call insanity doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. I guess they need to get honest and take a personal inventory of themselves. If they do that, they will see that the hopeless revolving door syndrome that they are such a part of is insane. They are the ones practicing insane behavior with their false teachings. Calling a higher power a chair and putting everyone on medication is just more of the same "lost soul" behavior. If they look at the rate of depression, divorce, suicide, and relapse their programs produce, any sane person would draw the same conclusion. Hey, look at me. I'm suicidal, been divorced three times, got six kids by different partners, have to go to meetings for the rest of my life, and admit defeat, but at least I'm not drinking: I don't have a relationship with God the Father, haven't accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour, and my soul is going to Hell when I die, but at least I'm not drinking. I was actually deceived by them and tried their game for years. There is no victory outside of Jesus Christ. They try to teach people to make good choices but it was their choices that got them in their situations in the first place. If you ever have a chance to get to know some of the people that work and run these facilities or organizations a lot of their lives are messed up royally. They can't practice what they preach because they are trying to live their own lives without God. In other words they are trying to be their own god. It is one spiritually sick person trying to help another with the same hopeless results.

I had gotten on my knees one night and asked God to help me again even if it meant turning myself in for my past. Two nights later, I'm coming up to my mom's house and there was a Sheriff's car in her yard. The Lord recalled the prayer and what happened last time I didn't do what I told God I would do. So facing the cops wasn't that bad of a choice. I pulled in and one of the sheriffs asked me if I knew why they were there? I said "no". She accused me of lying. No, I didn't say anything to her but I had been committing so many crimes for so long I couldn't even keep track of them. I wasn't lying. I really didn't know what they caught me for. There are police that believe they're winning this war by their human efforts. The Bible tells us it's a spiritual war not carnal: **Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.** This is why we all need God in our lives: **John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

We have to put on the whole armor of God to battle the warring spirits: **Ephesians 6:13-20 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.** This is what I needed to do once and for all.

I did my time for the local charges and got released. I went to a couple of churches and started a Bible correspondence course. At a men's prayer and fast, I got to spend three day just praying with different guys from the Church. There were a couple of men there that had secrets that would have been best handled sooner in their

lives. That was the last motivation I needed. We got home on a Saturday night and on Sunday, I called the pastor and told him that I had to know if this guy had been convicted for something I had done some 21 years ago. I explained that I had to do what I thought God wanted me to do. I wanted to get in the ministry full time and knew either God would deal with my secret or Satan would use it to discredit the church as he has so many times in the past with different churches and television ministry's.

In a couple of weeks, I got to talk to one of the members of the Church who was a New York State Troupier. He came over with one of his superiors and they took a statement from me on the stabbing in N.C., a hit and run, and my involvement in a drive by shooting; where two people got killed and some other things. I figured I'd unload it all instead of having to do it twice. The drive by shooting was facilitation and because it was over five years, they weren't interested. The hit and run was on my way up from N.C. I don't even know exactly where it happened. The incident in N.C. was the only thing they got a response on. That was so long ago, and they didn't have computers at that time, so the paper work was stored in boxes in the basement somewhere. The cop down there say's he remembers the case but didn't remember if the man died or not. He didn't think it was solved. He also stated that they could not do anything based only on my confession and trying to put together any kind of a case now would be almost impossible. If it was anything less than first degree murder the statue of limitation would have run out. Personally, I've got no problem believing God is protecting me. The Lord may not ever plan on me going to prison, but He does expect me to be obedient.

You must remember that the peace I have, I received from God. I know that my sins are forgiven: **Romans 4:7-8 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.** I don't have to run any more. If I end up in prison or jail until a twenty one year old case (that may or may not have been a crime) is cleared up, the same God Almighty that kept me alive, even when I tried to kill myself, will still protect me there: **2 Corinthians 11:10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.**

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I know there are many people that can't understand why I did what I did to get the peace of God as promised in the scriptures, but if there is any truth in my life now, it's from my relationship with Jesus Christ: **John 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*** It is not from any of my own doing: **Ephesians 2:1-10 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.***

Proper Fear

I just want to clear up what made the difference in the way I responded to the Word of God from when I first accepted Christ to when things started to really change: **Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.** Even though I experienced the things I went through I find it is best spoken through the Word of God. I don't know life or myself as well as my Creator does. **Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.**

I needed two fears present in my life to bring about change. One, fear of the destructive powers of sin. To turn from sin and it's control of my life: **James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

The other fear was of God. **Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** I needed to fear God's wrath and be drawn by His love and saving grace. **Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;): Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

I needed to come to an understanding that all things came from God or Satan. There was no middle ground: **Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

This idea that I could do something to make myself a good person was totally against what the Word of God says: **Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ,**

and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Doing anything good that counts in the eyes of God can only be done through us by Christ as we yield ourselves to the Word of God: **Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** The Bible makes it clear that there is no one good but God: **Mark 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.** And there is only one God: **Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:**

Any changes, that were going to happen in my life had to come from God. This could only happen after I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour: **John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

As I said earlier I can't put into words how out of control my life was. It was like I was under control of demonic influences that wouldn't go away. I had been doing drugs and committing crimes and there was no way anything was going to change unless I got the authority of God in my life that is described in the Bible. I became more and more fearful of something and I didn't know where the fear was coming from: **Psalms 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.**

Earlier in the evening, the night I prayed to God and asked, (begged) Him to come back in my life I had read some passages in the Bible about judgment day: **Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:**

This stuff was scaring me. **Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**

Was I saved or was I going to Hell? **Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

Which judgment was I going to? Was I going to the judgment seat of Christ as a child of God for blessing's and rewards based on righteous works after salvation: **2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.** Or, was I going to the White Throne Judgment for everlasting torment based on my sin. **Revelation 20:10-15 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

I started gaining a fear of God and loosing my fear of what man could do to me: **Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

I didn't understand why, if I was saved, I didn't live any different than I did before. I would get clean for a while, but after a period of time, cravings would take over almost at will. As I was reading the Bible on that particular night, I really prayed to the Lord to show me what I was doing wrong and I came across a couple of verses that gave me some spiritual insight. **Luke 11:24-26 When**

the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

This sounded like what I was going through. I wasn't replacing the sin in my life with things of God and with out that I had no defense against temptation. This is why I kept returning to my drug use (vomit-see 2 peter 2:20-22). Now, I needed the Lord to show me what to do to stop it.

I must explain. The understanding that God has given me now is greater than what I had then. From this point, I am going to insert scriptures that applied to my life then even if I didn't have the understanding at the time. The Lord has blessed me with a greater understanding to help others with problems similar to the ones He worked out in my life. I must give all honor and glory to God, thanks and praise through His Son Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, today and forever, amen.

There were two things that were obviously missing from my life. The first was godly sorrow. I was sorry each and every time I got in trouble. When I got caught I was sorry. Sometimes after I committed certain sins I felt bad. I couldn't put my finger on it at the time but while I was in the act it felt good but after it was over with there was a sudden let down. Like something was really wrong but I didn't know what. I would feel bad or sorry but not enough to turn from it. You see I had begun to believe that I really didn't have to answer to anyone for what I did. I thought if I got away with it there was no, what the Bible calls recompense, just payment for my sin. I believed the worlds lies about never having to stand before an almighty God and give account. You see the kind of sorrow I experienced was not the kind that was going to get me right with God: **2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.** As a lost person we need to come to repentance of our sin or Adamic nature: **Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.** This is the nature by which our death sentence is passed down to us by

the transgression of Adam in the Garden of Eden: **Romans 5:12** **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**. Our sin nature is what separates us from a holy, just, and righteous God. We cannot enter into a relationship with God the Father without dealing with our sin nature. This is why God is justified calling man in his natural state children of the Devil: **John 8:44** **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

This is also why God came down and took on the form of sinful flesh: **Romans 8:3** **For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**. This payment for sin that Jesus Christ paid is what makes salvation for our souls possible. We, because of our Adamic nature, could have never paid our own sin debt. God had to make the sacrifice for us and He did this when He sent His Son to die in our place: **1 John 2:2** **And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.** We, as an unrighteous sinner, have only one choice. Do we accept this payment by faith or reject the shed blood of Jesus Christ and try to get into Heaven based on our own merit?

Jesus Christ is the advocate between God the Father and the lost soul before one gets saved: **1 Timothy 2:5** **For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**. The only prayer that God will hear from a lost person is that for salvation. He will not hear a prayer for anything else: **Proverbs 21:4** **An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.** Since our sin nature is what has separated us from God, that must be dealt with first. If we are not willing to deal with that fact then we can go no further. Once we have dealt with that then our condition in the eyes of God has changed. Then our soul is no longer in an un regenerated condition. Once this is done it is settled forever.

Repentance also plays a role in the life of the believer. Only after we are saved can we confess our individual sins to God the Father

through Jesus Christ. It is at this point that Jesus Christ becomes our mediator: **1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**. This is when we confess our daily sins to God: **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** We must confess our sins to God and forsake them. That means to recognize that we have sinned against God: **Psalms 51:3-5 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.,** and turn from them to God: **Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** You see, it is a turning away from our sin nature and turning to God through faith in Jesus Christ and His righteousness that gets us saved. It is turning from our daily sins and turning to God through faith in Jesus Christ to stay right with Him but not to keep our salvation, only to be in a place of blessing. This obedience to God's Word will affect our state but not our eternal condition. Once we are saved we are eternally righteous with God through our faith in Christ because of what He did. That is why it says in **1 John 3:9 that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: 1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** But because of our new, dual nature we still battle sin in our flesh. You see our day to day state changes with our obedience to God's Word. We are eternally perfect in Christ: **2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.** ,but we can be completely out of the will of God from day to day or moment to moment by fulfilling the lust of the flesh: **Ephesians 2:2-3 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times**

past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. When I returned to my sins I was fulfilling the desires of the flesh and yielding to my old nature instead of my new nature, the Holy Spirit that now indwells me. Once we are saved we do not have to sin. We then have a choice. Before we got saved all we could do is sin. We were servants of sin bound by the cords of our iniquity: **Proverbs 5:21-23 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.**

After we get saved God will hear our prayers and we also have the ability to intercede for others. I must also point out at this time that God answering our prayers after salvation is conditional. We must be living in a manor that God can bless again our daily state: **Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.** God can't bless sin. We must be obedient. Our only purpose is to glorify, bring honor, and praise to God: **Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.** This is why we separate from the world and live Christ like. Our witness and testimony is the tool that God uses to draw all men unto Himself: **John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.** This not only pertains to people but also to nations. God will bless a nation that will put Him first.

The second part in my life that was missing was spiritual growth. I fully believe that my moment of salvation was in Prison. The problems I suffered after my release were because I stopped growing in the Lord. The moment I decided there was something God told me to do, that I wouldn't do, was the moment I stopped giving God Authority in my life. The power I enjoyed in overcoming temptation went away when my obedience to the Lord stopped. It's

not that I became a bad person, just outside of Christ I wasn't any good to begin with. Remember, anything good comes from God.

Some where, about the time I stopped dealing with things in my past, I took my will back. I also failed to yield to the will of God when I wanted to get High. God's will in the life of the Christian is for us to be Christ like: **2 Corinthians 3:18** **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** When I took my will back I took back my old nature, (man's will and his sinful, Adamic nature is the same). **James 1:23** **For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:**

This failure to yield to God's will grieved the Holy Spirit: **Ephesians 4:14-32** **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing**

which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Paul discusses the struggle between man's Adamic nature and his new holy nature in the seventh chapter of the book of Romans: **Romans 7:13-25 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

This struggle takes place in the life of all believers. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a person becomes aware of God's will. With accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, you have accepted the truth and now have access to the truth: **John 14:6-7 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had**

known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

The lost cannot serve God nor can they please Him
John 14:17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

We are to discern between good and evil: **1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**

This discernment comes from God thru His word:: **Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

Luke 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

The lost, (unsaved) are not God's children: **John 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

They are called the children of wrath: **Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.** Sometimes referred to as children of disobedience: **Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**

One of the major changes in my life now is the implementation of the commands to separate. There are several scriptures discussing separation. This is not just turning from sin but turning Godward. I had to replace evil with good. Things of the world had to be replaced with things of God. **Colossians 3:1-25 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our**

life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, *do it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

A child of God has nothing to do with the world because they no longer have anything in common: **1 John 2:15-17 Love not the**

world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. This is the commandment I violated when I bought my Corvette. I invested in the riches of this world instead of Heaven. The riches of this world are not eternal, they are only temporary.

The world has no understanding of God. Without Christ in their life, the Bible tells us that the gospel is foolishness to them: **1 Corinthians 1:17-31** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

The world hates Christians because of their relationship with God the Father through God the Son, (Jesus Christ): **John 15:18-27** **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.**

God the Holy Spirit is our spiritual guide through our Christian walk. We need to be in tune with His guiding hand. We must yield to the will of God through what is revealed to us by the Spirit through His word: **1 Corinthians 2:1-16** **And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this**

world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? **But we have the mind of Christ.**

One of the ways the Word of God compares Jesus Christ with the world is light and darkness: **2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?** In my back slidden state, when I was living in my sin, I was choosing darkness over light as a saved person. The Bible says that during that period of my life I was an enemy of God: **James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.** I never thought of it like that but after God purged me from my sins and I went back to them I was telling God that He wasn't good enough for me and that I preferred my sin.

Another one of my problems in getting victory over sin in my life was, I wanted to pick and choose what sins I gave up. I really just wanted to stop the ones that were getting me arrested and keep the ones I still thought I enjoyed. I really didn't want God to help me give up anything that I didn't see as causing problems in my life. As I said earlier, a person either is a follower of Christ or of Satan: **Ephesians 5:1-21 Be ye therefore followers of God, as**

dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Churches

The last separation I want to talk about is a delicate matter. I decided to put this in it's own chapter because it's that important in the life of any Christian but even more so for a new Christian. The Bible tells us what we should do when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour: **Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.**

Finding a Christ centered Church is not an easy thing today. Especially if you want a soul winning Church with a Pastor that's on fire for the Lord. If you get out of prison and want to give your life to the Lord and serve Him, it's going to be an extra difficult thing being a convicted felon. There is a lot of mistrust in churches today especially in the area of children. You will have to be faithful to God for a while before people will trust you again. It is imperative you look for a pastor that can take the time and disciple you. Some churches will have a discipleship program specifically designed for new Christians. Take advantage of these tools. Of course they will never replace your own daily devotionals or prayer time but God will work in your life through others.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter we need to be very careful about sin in our lives and the people around us. This is even more important when it comes to picking a church and a pastor. We need to get in the habit of asking God what He thinks about matters. Lets get something clear right away: **2 Corinthians 11:1-15 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in**

Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Not all churches are churches of God the Almighty. Satan has his own churches: **Revelation 2:9** I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Satan also has his own ministers: **2 Corinthians 11:14-15** And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. Their purpose is to bring death to souls: **John 10:10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Satan doesn't want people to get saved and go to Heaven: **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds

of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

It is essential that you get in a Church where you will be fed a steady diet of scriptures. Both preaching and teaching the Word is necessary for Christian growth. The Bible tells us that all scripture is necessary: **2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.** You must have a pastor that will lead by example: **1 Peter 5:1-3 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.**

Don't get stuck in a church where the only thing heard from behind the pulpit is the pastor's opinion. Man's opinion will eventually get you back where you started. I can tell someone what I think and sometimes I do but the Word of God speaks for itself. All men make mistakes. What you have is a finite mind trying to explain an infinite God. We are prone to make mistakes. In fact the Bible makes a profound statement pertaining to this topic: **Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.**

Get your own understanding of the Word of God. Nothing replaces a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and that comes through the Word. Praying, reading, studying and believing, coupled with obedience, will get you the discernment spoken of on the previous pages. It will give access to the knowledge of truth to get you through the road blocks Satan puts up for you. If you get deeply rooted in the Word, you will have things in the spiritual world revealed to you.

I want to take this time to point out that not every thing that comes your way in the form of a difficulty comes from Satan. We are promised trials and tribulation from God: **1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found un-**

to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: God will try us to test, and help our faith grow. Yes, sometimes He will give Satan permission to try us: **Luke 22:31-32** **And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.** When things aren't going well God's desired effect is that we draw closer to Him. God will also give us trials so that after we have gone through the problem we can help others going through similar situations: **2 Corinthians 1:4** **Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**

The Holy Spirit will reveal men's heart condition to you through God's Word. You will find the fruit that a church / pastor produces and can trace them backwards to the heart condition the Bible say's produces those fruits. Everything is of God or Satan.

Example - Satan committed the sin of pride: **Ezekiel 28:17** **Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.** A prideful church / pastor will be dealt with. God didn't let Lucifer get away with it and he was already in Heaven: **Ezekiel 28:18-19** **Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.**

The sin of pride has a promise from God: **Proverbs 16:18** **Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.** God can't bless sin.

Sin in a church will grieve the Holy Spirit possible to the point of quenching the Holy Spirit and cause the church to be spiritually dead and become an unfruitful branch: **John 15:4-8** **Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in**

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

There are unfruitful Christians and those that bear evil fruit: **Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**

If Christ isn't your focus, you wont grow in the Lord. The same holds true for a church.

There is a more dangerous aspect to a non-Christ centered Church and that is a church that has the spirit of Antichrist: **1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.**

They don't have to be doing human sacrifices to be of Satan. They just need to have a false doctrine, something against the Word of God. I can't go into other religions. I'll be classified as writing hateful or inciteful material and be kept out of Prison by the state. Just read the Bible and keep your eyes open, pay attention to details: **2 John 1:7-11 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abi-**

deth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. A simple litmus test is what think ye of Christ? Jesus ask the Pharisees the same question: **Matthew 22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.** Does the pastor believe the book? Does he believe in the virgin birth? The blood atonement? The substitutionary death of Christ? Repentance? Was Jesus God in the flesh? How about the literal death, burial and resurrection of Jesus? The return of the Lord to set up His kingdom on earth? And so forth. These are very important questions one needs to ask a potential pastor but you must know the answers yourself before you can know if what he believes lines up with the book.

There is a man in Florida that is set to be executed for killing an Abortion Clinic Doctor. They interviewed his spiritual leader and he said, "The man did the right thing". Now I know abortion is a sin, but The Bible says: **Hebrews 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. Jude 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Psalms 94:1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance *belongeth*; O God, to whom vengeance *belongeth*, shew thyself.**

God not only doesn't need our help but we sin when we do things like that and bring God's chastening / wrath down on us. That spiritual leader is leading that man to Hell with that kind of false doctrine.

If he knew his Bible, he wouldn't be following that type of church leadership. He said in an interview he thinks he did God a favor. I think he meant he did god a favor not God.

Get into a good KJV Bible believing church where you get the Word of God not the spirit of antichrist. The Bible tells us that all scripture was written by inspiration of God: **2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable**

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. We either believe the book or we don't: **2 Peter 1:20-21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**

I have been in churches where they preach out of two different versions of the Bible to give a comparison. God is not the author of confusion, Satan is: **1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.** If you don't like what one says pick the other one: **Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;** That's not God the Almighty talking in those Churches. If you study the Bible and try to have a conversation with the pastor they never seem to know what they believe or they believe everything. There are several books on the KJV versus. All you really need is to study out is the scriptures that refer to the word of God. Once you understand them, you will see that only the KJV fulfills Bible prophecy about the Word of God. No other translation is the divine, inspired, preserved Word of God. Once you understand this verse and how the KJV came about, you will see it only applies to the KJV: **Psalms 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.** Also, if you study out where all the other translations come from, (Revised Version Manuscript) and what the Bible says about Egypt: **Isaiah 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!** It will shed more light on the subject.

There are over 100 of the other translations. All the ones I have looked at are missing scripture verses. This also fulfills scriptures: **Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.**

Proverbs 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Revelation 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from the things which are written in this book.* Look at who was behind the other manuscripts: **1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**

Just read and believe like you did to get saved. Anyone that doesn't think that the God of creation, the God of all the Old and New Testament miracles, and the God of the promised second coming, along with the whole redemption plan can get us His Word, in a manor in which we can know we have the true Word of God must believe in someone else. The Bible tells us that: **1 Corinthians 8:5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)** The God I serve is: **Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:** The God I serve not only got His Word written down but He also gave it to me. It's called The Authorized King James Version.

There is one more thing to keep in mind for people that say or do something against the Word of God: **Hebrews 10:31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*** Christians always need to be careful who they pick as their spiritual leader: **Matthew 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.** We don't want to think we are saved because we followed some religion nonsense: **Mark 7:6-8 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.**

Colossians 2:20-23 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. Following the traditions of men don't make us right with God.

On two different occasions, after I got released from jail, (and having read a King James while locked up) I got involved with churches that didn't know what the Word of God was. After being in their church for a while the understanding that I did have got clouded just like theirs. There is no power in changing the Word of God to something else. The understanding of the Word of God is the most precious gift, not to be taken lightly. Memorizing scripture does not give you understanding as to what they mean. Satan quoted scripture to Jesus when he tempted Him in the dessert. He also misquoted scripture to Eve. He's been twisting God's Word around since creation. People say the other translations are easier to understand. Two things, first, the scriptures don't study out after they change and you loose your cross references, second, being a solder for Christ isn't meant to be the easy way: **Matthew 7:13** **Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:**

If we decide to make Christ the center of our life, the Bible tells us it will be coupled with trials and tribulations: **2 Timothy 3:12** **Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.** If we keep our eyes on the Lord we will be fine: **Psalms 34:19** **Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.**

The last time I was released from jail I enrolled in a Correspondence Bible Institute to get my own understanding of the Word so I don't have to rely on another person's point of view. I don't have to wait until Sunday to get questions answered. It makes me dig through the scriptures. I learn more about God's Word when I have to look things up. This in turn increases my relationship with the Lord.

We talk to God through prayer and He talks to us through His Word.

If you want to serve the Lord when you get out you should start while you're in prison. You will also want to stay away from slothful or backslidden Christians: **Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.** They will be used by Satan to convince you to stop running your race. If a church doesn't witness or win souls, stay away! If you hang out long enough, you will be like them. After a while they don't even understand what went wrong or why they're no longer on fire for the Lord: **Titus 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.** Sometimes they will even blame it on God.

Self-righteous attitudes are also a prevalent danger. I have been exposed to a lot of people that think that because they didn't get arrested their sin wasn't as bad as mine. Being around people that tell you how they were not as bad as us (convicts, drug addicts, etc), or that they can't relate to inmates, and are constantly referring to us as "those people", tends to wear down your desire to be a Christian and live right. Don't let it! Remember we stand before a just God: **Isaiah 45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.** For a righteous judgment: **2 Thessalonians 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:** This is the righteousness of God: **Luke 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.** Not the self-righteousness of man: **Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:**

Also, stay away from churches that think they are saved by works. Any church that thinks you can lose your salvation is a church of works. The simple fact is if you believe you can lose salvation then you believe you are doing something to keep it (works): **Romans 5:12-21 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed up-**

on all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 2:7-9 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

God provided us salvation and keeps us saved: **1 Peter 1:5** Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. We don't have anything to do with it: **Philippians 1:6** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: Once we are saved it is God the Holy Spirit (the third person of the trinity) that seals us with the promise of salvation: **Ephesians 1:13** In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, . We cannot loose our salvation. For a

blood bought child of God to be able to loose his salvation Jesus Christ would have to loose His and we know that is impossible because in Him is life: **1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. John 17:1-3 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** Christ risen from the dead is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 co. 15:1-4). We are justified before God through our faith in Christ: **Romans 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.** It is a result of what Jesus Christ has done on Calvary that we have everlasting life. When Jesus said on the cross it is finished all the work for God's plan of salvation was done in and through Him: **John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.** We cannot lose our salvation because we never did anything to get it. Salvation is the work of God: **John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.** We cannot add to or take away from the gospel without corrupting the truth. The resulting effect will be a false or counterfeit gospel. **Galatians 1:6-12 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of**

Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Another thing to avoid in a church is one that believes that water baptism is essential for salvation. Again this is a works church. Water baptism is only an outward act of obedience. It is to be a picture of the Spiritual baptism that has already taken place. It couldn't be clearer than in 1 Peter where it states that water baptism is a like figure. It is a picture of the death, burial, (going under the water) and resurrection, (coming up out of the water). It is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (water baptism) but "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" that we are saved: **1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:**. The only baptism that will save anyone is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is by faith in Christ Jesus. Now, water baptism should follow salvation as an act of obedience toward God. It is a testimony before the church that we are like minded or in agreement with other Christians. It is an outward act signifying the inward act that has already taken place.

There are also churches that teach that you must pray for the Holy Spirit. Listen: the Bible is very clear on this topic: **Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** If you don't have the Holy Spirit in you then you are not saved. These churches are talking about another spirit as in: **2 Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.** A good booklet on this topic is by Dr. M. H. Tabb called "The Charismatic Heresy". It is available from Foundation Ministries, P.O. Box 1451, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32549.

A lot of you have written angry letters to me, blaming God for the mess your in. Some of you have told me about accepting Christ and then something bad happened that you don't think you de-

serve. Get serious! Did you read what happened to me after I accepted Christ? Even if you don't have a secret sin in your past, now that you are a child of God, Satan will send problems to keep God from using you to bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ: **Ephesians 6:16** **Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

Luke 22:31 **And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: One can not blame God for his or her response to a given situation: 1 Corinthians 10:13** **There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**

We must believe all scriptures even if they don't appear pleasing to our flesh: **2 Timothy 3:12** **Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

Just rest in the promises: **James 1:2-18** **My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is**

drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

When things seem to be overwhelming we need to cling to God's Word even if we don't understand it: **Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.** God's ways aren't our ways: **Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.**

As I said before sometimes God lets Satan do things in our lives to encourage us to turn toward Him more and to give us more faith in Him. The worst thing a Christian can do is what I did. Turn from God when we have problems. We need to have the kind of relationship with Him that He can bless: **1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.**

Don't be discouraged: **1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.**

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

Compare what the Bible says about the comparison of our Christian walk to what Christ did.

Ours: **Luke 14:27-30 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.**

Christ's: **Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

We should have confidence in our Christian walk because of what Christ has already done: **Romans 8:34-39** **Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We should be encouraged through Christ. We have great and precious promises from our Lord. Keep in mind that: **Romans 5:1-11** **Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.**

What Do You Believe

The Bible tells us: **Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

The wages of sin is death. **Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

If you stay the way you are, you are condemned. You do not have to commit any sin to go to Hell. You are already condemned because of your sin nature: **John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

If you say you no sin: **1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

The Bible tells you that Jesus Christ is the only way. **John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

1) If you confess that you are a sinner and repent of your sin nature: **2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

2) Believe that Jesus is the Christ: **John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

3) Call upon the name of Jesus: **Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

4) Ask Jesus to come into your life, forgive you of our sin debt, be your personal Saviour and confess Him as Lord. He will save you: **Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Then, and only then we will you have your sin debt paid and receive the promise of eternal life: **John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

The lost go into everlasting punishment: **Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**

Revelation 20:14-15 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

If you do not accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour there is no redemption for your soul: **1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:**

The choice you make in this life is eternal.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 3:1-21 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

To those of you in prison and those of you free, (but in a spiritual prison) I pray that the Lord works in your life and brings you to an understanding of the knowledge of truth. Those that are saved but do not have a healthy spiritual relationship with our Lord and Saviour, I pray that you repent and get right with God in your heart:
Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect *man*, neither will he help the evil doers:

I wandered around for years looking for something and at times I wasn't sure what. I tried to fill my soul with (anything and every-

thing) that would make me feel complete, but it never worked. I would wander from one shallow, hollow, empty relationship to another, but nothing ever lasted. Women, drugs, money, nothing filled that desire in my heart to feel like I belonged, was wanted, or needed in any significant way. I know now that what was missing was a relationship with my creator: **John 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.**

This Love is found in Jesus Christ: **Romans 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Man has been separated from God since the Garden of Eden: **Genesis 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.**

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's Word in the Garden caused the separation from God the lost experience today: **Genesis 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**

The relationship with God the Father, that my soul was separated from and craved for, is now present in my life in the person of Jesus Christ. **1 Timothy 2:5 For *there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;***

You can have this relationship yourself. All you have to do is ask: **Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

So, if you are in prison now, you know why you are getting this booklet. You are part of my mission field. The Lord has laid upon my heart a burden for those in similar situations. Through the trials and tribulations in my life, God has revealed a need to reach out to souls, especially those lost or backslidden in Prison. Until we meet together in the presence of the Lord, God bless.

Psalms 33:18-22 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waiteth for the LORD: *he is* our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

Recommended reading by the author:

Complete Salvation: Body, Soul, and Spirit-The trinity of man in redemption.

Security Guaranteed-The role of the Godhead in securing our salvation.

The Just Shall Live by Faith-A 25 lesson, 8 addenda study on the book of Romans.

These books are written by Dr. M. H. Tabb and are available from Foundation Ministries at: P.O. Box 1451, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32549