

I am 30 years old and I am married with two children. I would like to share with you the Lord's redemptive work in my life. Early in my life I experienced the consequences of living in a fallen world. When I was two years old, my mother passed away from the AIDS virus. This event left a tear in my heart and mind that would lead me down a calamitous path throughout my teenage years. After my mother's death, I was raised by my father with the help of my two grandmothers. My father was a hard worker and a dedicated father who gave all that he could to provide for us. However, none of my father's temporal possessions brought peace to my life.

When I was five years old, my father's mother enrolled me into her Roman Catholic Church's catechism classes. She was a dedicated and practicing Catholic who wanted to introduce the knowledge of the Lord to me. From the start of these classes I was taught that I had broken God's Law and that his judgement was on me. The only hope that was offered to me was the Sacraments and encouragement to do my best in my effort of obedience. The Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ was spoken of as some abstract truth that had no power for me. I tried to be obedient, but naturally I failed time after time. It was at this point my hatred for the Triune God started to manifest actively in my mind. I came to the resolve that if I could not please God, I would throw myself full force into sin.

By the time I was in high school my life was in a state of rebellion. My commitment to sin produced lying, stealing, manipulation, lustful desires, and every other sinful inclination in my heart. My sin coupled with erratic emotions of anxiety and anger created a ticking time bomb. I separated myself from my family. I looked for acceptance in all the wrong places. To counteract the growing instability in my life I turned to alcohol at the age of 15. Immediately, I knew I found what I was looking for. It quickly escalated to a daily past time. All my faculties were committed to finding ways to escape reality. Sin and Satan are deceitful. They make you believe that what they offer bring joy, but deep down they destroy you. As my drinking progressed depression started to develop. Instead of looking inward for the reason, I blamed my external circumstances. My family, teachers, and peers were to blame for all my problems. Soon, drinking was not enough. In a few short years, I was consuming a multitude of prescription and street drugs. My life was on a downward spiral. I decided to search for help.

During my ten-year addiction I tried everything the world had to my offer to solve my addiction. I threw myself at the mercy of psychiatrists, medication, self-help groups, and rehab centers. Nothing worked long term. Just after my 25th birthday my father convinced me to go into a Christian drug and alcohol program. At first, I was hesitant, but I cried out to God in my detox bed asking for his help. He answered my prayers. A few days later I was on a plane heading to the program where my life was changed. The Spirit called me to repentance and faith almost immediately through the preaching of his Word. I saw my addiction as idolatry against a holy God. I was broken. The Lord put a love for Him in my heart and a desire to walk in obedience. It has not been easy journey, but God has been faithful to complete the work that he began almost five years ago.

Since my completion in the program, I have been blessed with a beautiful family that encourages me to die to myself and live unto the Lord. I was able to serve in a Christian ministry serving men who had the same addictions that I did. I have found a flock that is committed to the proclamation of the Gospel. I do not know where the remainder of my pilgrimage in this world will take me, but I do know that I will be continually conformed into the image of my Savior. I await the day I will see him face to face. *Ezekiel 36: 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*