

Overcomers for Christ

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017

T. Allen
Thammasak Averagsakul

Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

August 2016



Believe ... You ARE Blessed to be a Blessing

By Wade Anderson

"For God is the one who gives seed to the farmer and bread to eat. In the same way, He will give you many opportunities to do good, and He will produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously. And when we take our gifts to those who need them, they will break out in thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:10-11) (NLT)

Now listen to the Message translation ... ***"This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God." (2 Corinthians 9:10-11) (Message)***

I hadn't really told anyone but earlier on in the year something in my heart said, "You'll be Santa Claus." At that point I decided to leave my beard grow. I know, it doesn't look like I ever cut it but I do. Anyways, I believe it was somewhere around October that Living Word Bible Church began planning for the promotion of the Angel Tree and Foster Care events for Christmas. It was in the middle of this meeting topic that I opened my mouth and blurted out, "If you need someone to be Santa for this event I've got a Santa outfit at home." By the looks on their faces and the laughter I don't believe they had even given Santa a thought ... yet. Well that did it. The very next day I received an email that they were taking me up on my offer.

At that point, I began mentally searching for that Santa outfit I said that I had. Instead of unpacking all of the tubs of Christmas lights and decorations in October, Michelle gave me the phone number where I could go rent a suit. However, when I arrived there they only had one or two out on the floor in October. By the time I went back, one month later, I'd decided that I wasn't going to rent one I was going to buy an even better one and keep it for the coming years. The day I brought it home and hung it in the closet I knew I had to come up with some sort of a story for Anthony. Let me explain.

Anthony is our 8 1/2 soon to be 9 year old grandson that has an amazing imagination and still 'believes' there is a Santa Claus. Why do you think it is that people want to burst the bubble of a child that still 'believes' in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny for that matter? Whatever the reasoning I'm not going to do that to him. When he comes to me with that conclusion I'll still act completely shocked until 'he' convinces me otherwise. He'll arrive there but NOT this year. Listen how he helped me with this outreach at the church for Christmas. Like I said above I knew I needed a story of why I would be dressed as Santa Claus.

One day when I picked him up from school he said to me, "Grandpa, I know that all of these Santa Claus' at the malls and other places aren't the 'real' Santa. The 'real' Santa is at the North Pole making sure all the work gets done and the toys are ready for him to bring on Christmas Eve. All of these other guys are Santa's 'helpers.'" Little did I know but my daughter Courtney had already been reinforcing this to him and that was my way in to my story.

I went home later that day and scribbled out a letter from 'The desk of Santa Claus' himself enlisting me for duty as his 'helper' here in Arizona. A few days later I called Anthony on the phone and read him the scribbled 'letter'. I said, "Guess what? I received a letter from Santa Claus asking me to be one of his helpers here in Arizona." He answered, "YOU ARE KIDDING ME!" I told him, "Nope, listen, I'll read you the letter. 'Dear Wade 'Duck' Anderson, I have been checking the Christmas lists from the children for this year and it seems to me that I need some more Santa's 'helpers' down there in Arizona. I know that you have a great HO! HO! HO!, a nice large beard, and I've also noticed that your belly has grown slightly. So, I would like for you to be one of my 'helpers' this year. I'll send you one of the Santa's 'helpers' suits soon. Thank you for helping ... Santa Claus.'" When I finished reading I could hear the joy and the 'I believe' in his voice as he said, "THAT'S COOL GRANDPA!"

I knew from this point it was a go. But wait! Now I had to produce the actual 'letter' for him to read for himself by the next time I seen him. Immediately, I got on the phone and called John and Courtney to let them know just what I needed. Overnight they got together and produced the letter on Santa stationary AND the envelope that it was to arrive in ... complete with an official Santa seal on the letter, a Santa stamp, post mark and Santa's address at the North Pole on the envelope. My daughter Courtney handed it off to me the very morning that I was to attend his 'Jingle Bell Jog' at the school. As him and I were walking across the school yard to the event I opened my jacket and pulled from the inside pocket, the 'very' letter that Santa had sent (wink, wink). Anthony looked up at me and said, "Wait, let me see that for a minute." As he examined every detail from top to bottom, like a rock from a sling shot his eyes were then fixed back to the address where Santa lived. That was when he said, "SO THAT'S HIS REAL ADDRESS! I'll have to borrow this from you later so I can write him directly."

Let me say right here that it was not the Living Word Bible Church that funded this particular outreach. They already had plenty of irons in the fire full of Christmas events. It was the people in the church that recognized the need and stepped up

large for the needs of others in the body. Let me also mention that this was an outreach totally separate from the Angel Tree and Foster Care events. That's what the body is suppose to do, right? We are to help meet the needs of the rest of the family. We see in **Acts 2:45** (International Standard Version), **"They made it their practice to sell their possessions and goods and to distribute the proceeds to everyone, as anyone had need."** When the body of Christ, the people in the church, step up to the plate and each give just a little and place it in God's hands He will always cause it to multiply to meet the need. People we have got to get a God attitude about giving and when we do, you will NEVER out give God! EVERYTHING we have belongs to God anyways so I encourage you all to **Believe ... You ARE Blessed to be a Blessing**. Listen here to the attitude that the early church had. In **Acts 4:32-34a** (NLT) we read, **"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything that they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them."**

I picked Anthony up from school early the day the we were scheduled for the evening outreach at the church. I already knew that he wanted to be my elf so Michelle had bought them both elf hats to wear that night. After I had colored my beard and made my cheeks and nose rosy red Anthony walked with me in to where I had my suit all laid out in preparation. As he stood and looked at my suit he looked up at me with his elf hat on and said, "Grandpa, I can't be your elf wearing an elf hat and kid's school cloths. I have to have an outfit too." So I yelled in to Michelle, "Come take this elf to get him his own outfit." They left, and in a flash they were back and everyone began to get into character. Anthony became 'Bob the Elf' and I, well you know who I was.

When I say that we got in to character I mean to tell you 'Bob' was amazing! I'm proud of all my grandsons already but that night 'Bob' made me even more proud of him. 'Bob' interacted with the kids in his own way by using his imagination which 100% helped keep their dreams alive. While I was in my spot giving gifts, helping them unwrap gifts, answering their questions and taking pictures, 'Bob' was filling sandwich bags with cookies and candy canes for them to take home with them.

Out of the blue one little boy came over to me and asked, "does 'Bob' really make all of the Lego's at the North Pole?" I answered quickly, "Well, yes he does. 'Bob' is in charge of the whole Lego department," but thought to myself, "Way to go 'Bob'." 'Bob' helped me hand out arms full of gifts to all the kids and nearly every cookie and candy cane we had. We didn't sit down and strategize this whole event out with each other. Everything that 'Bob' did came from his imagination, the way that he seen it in his very own heart the way elves operated.

The thing that made me the most proud of 'Bob' was the fact that he got it! His mom, dad and us as grandparents have done our best with these little ones to teach them that it is always better to give than receive, and we can NEVER out give God. Not once did 'Bob' give reluctantly or get angry because not one of those gifts were for him. **Second Corinthians 9:6-8** (NIV) is exactly the attitude that I watched my littlest grandson, I mean 'Bob the Elf', display. **"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in ALL things at ALL times, having ALL that you need, you WILL abound in every good work."** And **2 Corinthians 9:9** (NLT) says, **"Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will never be forgotten."** Giving is not usually a money issue, it's a HEART issue.

"Lord Jesus, we thank You that You present plenty of opportunities each and every day for us to be a blessing to those around us. Help us to remember that it's not only money that blesses people. Remind us that it's the simple things like a smile or a kind word to someone that could totally change their day. Above all else, help us to remember the love that You have shown us and that we share that love with those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen and Amen!"

Quote Worthy

"God specializes in things fresh and firsthand. His plans for you this year may outshine those of the past. He's prepared to fill your days with reasons to give Him praise."

- Joni Eareckson Tada - an evangelical Christian, author, radio host, and founder of Joni and Friends, an organization "accelerating Christian ministry in the disability community"

Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done **Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

Prayer Requests

My brother and I are in dire need of prayer here. We have other inmates trying to pollute the Word of God. For example, one guy told this kid that we don't have the Spirit inside us, after I told him that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, thus we are empowered as Christians (Christ in us) to fulfill the Word of God. **Romans 8:11** says, "**The Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you**". It is straight war in here. Another person told me that God treasures Lucifer more than Jesus Himself. I was like WHAT? For a half hour I battled three individuals who were trying to discredit the Power of Christ, thank God I knew the correct meaning of Scripture. I was praying silently, "Holy Spirit bless me with the ability to shut these clowns down, like Jesus did to the Pharisees." All of them walked away silently after I quoted Scripture countering their deception. The sad thing is, they were my friends and now I'm solo ... **A.L.**

I am a new believer in Christ. I was so amazed by all of you. I was wondering if you would send me some of those prayers. I just got some bad news, my dad has cancer, he can't eat or talk. My mom has face cancer. I feel so bad that I can't be there for them. All I can do is pray and have my friends pray. I also just lost my girlfriend and she took the kids with her. It feels like my whole world is coming down on me, no one loves me anymore. I'm losing everything I have. So all I can do is pray, I don't know how though. Will you help me pray and pray every day? I feel like God doesn't love me since I am losing everything in my life. Please help ... **C.S.**

I would like to receive prayer that I be released on my date to leave, as well as having a solid righteous path to follow upon my release ... **C.M.**

I was sentenced to a harsh sentence of 11 years but I have filed an appeal and God willing, I'll be home by 2017. I would like to ask for your prayers for the following: 1) My release in 2017, 2) Arizona prison and judicial reform, 3) Heal Joey and Natasha of alcohol addiction, 4) Protect, provide, heal and bless me, my family and my dogs. Thank you and God bless ... **A.H.**

I'll not lie. The temptations are hard and I know why, because I let them be strong. I need to be grounded and rooted deep in the Word and I've been slacking. After leaving the county jail, they threw my Bible away, so I'm going to order a new one. Hopefully, my family at **DS&S** is blessed in abundance. I'll be praying for you all. Please be praying for me, too, for times are kind of testing, but I am an overcomer in Christ ... **R.L.**

Praise Reports

I'm 45 years old and an ex-gang member/drug dealing/addict who surrendered to the Lord on June 10, 2015. It was the most awesome day of my life. Praise God ... **T.D.**

Every day there are new opportunities to either follow Christ or not. To speak the truth in love or not. So, many times I fail at this, growing in Christ-likeness. But it is good to see that there are continued opportunities to follow Christ, His Word and to live it out. Praise God for His daily mercy ... **D.C.**

I was in custody at the county jail. I rededicated my life to the Lord in the jail cell. I stay in fellowship with my Christian brothers on the yard and the body of the church. We are blessed to have workshops and seminars available to us in the church. The Lord is greater than this drug addiction and prison sentence. I believe these next seven years alone with the Lord will sling shot my relationship and faith in the Lord and for the rest of my life a lifetime commitment ... **P.C.**

I have been reduced to minimum custody status which means I am at a camp. I'm on the outside of the actual prison, after 16 years behind the walls and razor wire. What a blessing ... **A.K.**

First of all my thanks to our Heavenly Father, **DS&S** plus Michelle's brother, David, whom I had the pleasure in meeting back in 2010. IT was David that introduced me to **DS&S**, and you all have been faithful in service all these years. We have experienced each other's ups and downs within this period of time and through all that we all have turned to Christ Jesus to sustain us. I'm so joyful that what was lost (that relationship with our Heavenly Father) has been found in Christ Jesus. Now every time disappointment and losses come my way, I recall that I have sought and found our Heavenly Father. Stay firm, my **DS&S** family. My blessings and prayers go out to you all inside and out. Special blessings to David and his family and our extended family members throughout the prisons in the USA ... **R.R.**

Hey guys ... I'm writing so that I can get put on the mailing list to receive the newsletter. I've been Asatru for the last 10 years. For personal and family reasons I am now searching for that true Light. I've been locked down for the last decade and I am getting ready for my release in just over a year. I want to find that happiness in Christ that my pops always talks about. I'm reaching out for a little help and guidance. I know a ton of people in your churches light and I would like to receive your words and grow in His Word as well ... **J.G.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

We are One Body
By S.F.

Hello everyone ... It's been almost 4 1/2 years that I have been fighting my case and recently began to become a little depressed because of the stress of waiting for the court of appeals now for over 15 months. It seems like I pray never ending for the safety and well being of my mom and that God will bring me home, soon. It's been hard doing this time knowing that I should be home already. Evidently God is not done using me here where I am at so for that reason I'm okay. While I have been here God has shown and taught me so much. I feel I am ready to come home and I have the help there on the streets waiting for me. I know the blessing of my freedom will come soon. I have gained so much that I wouldn't have gotten anywhere else by being here on this yard. In the midst of it all I am grateful. Praise God!!

In one of your cards you mentioned that our pastors there at Living Word Bible Church had taught on 'The Body of Christ'. That caught my eye because I also did a similar study. I would like to share with the rest of the Overcomers for Christ family some of these Scriptures.

***"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We ARE ALL parts of His one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we ARE ALL one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs the others."* (Romans 12:4-5)**

***"No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for His body, which is the church. And WE ARE His body."* (Ephesians 5:29-30)**

***"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be humble and gentle. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of ALL, Who is over ALL and through ALL and IN ALL."* (Ephesians 4:1-6)**

***"You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works than looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts - limbs, organs, cells - but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of His one Spirit, we ALL said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which He has the final say in everything. Each of us is now a part of His resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain - His Spirit - where we ALL come to drink. "* (2 Corinthians 12:12-16 Message)**

I hope and pray that you all can feel the same Spirit that I did when I put this together. We ALL, those who have believed and received Jesus into our lives, whether we are locked up or on the streets, are a part of the body of Christ. We ALL have a certain responsibility as parts of His family and body. Listen here to the way the Message (Paraphrase) Translation shares **1 Peter 2:13-17**, ***"Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when He arrives. Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. LOVE YOUR SPIRITUAL FAMILY. Revere God. Respect the government."*** I thank God for helping me to get away from that old life and in to a new and improved one, into God's family, the body of Christ. Since I've come to this yard I've also learned to crochet and have been able to participate in making as much as possible for the Children's Crisis Center. I've also been thinking about making some friendship bracelets with tags attached to them that say, "You have more than a friend in God - God loves you."

I'll close with these words from the Apostle Paul in **Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)**, ***"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice - the kind He will accept. when you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think. Then you will know what God***

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From the Inside

wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is."

Life is All About Love

By G.B.B.

Let me open up with these two foundational scriptures: **"No matter what I say, what I believe and what I do, I am bankrupt without love." (1 Corinthians 13:36 Message)** **"Love means living the way God commanded us to live. As you have heard from the beginning, His command is this, Live a life of Love." (2 John 1:6 NCV)**

Brothers and Sisters, life is all about love. Because God is love (**1 John 4:8, 16**) the most important lesson He wants us to learn on earth is how to love. It is in loving that we are most like Him, so love is the foundational command He has given us. Jesus told us in **John 13:34-35**, **"A new command I give to you; love one another."** Learning to love unselfishly is not an easy task, in fact it runs counter to our self-centered nature. This is why we are given a lifetime to learn it. Of course, God wants us to love others in His family, other brothers and sisters in the Lord. And as we've already seen, this is the second most important purpose for our new lives. Peter tells us in **1 Peter 2:17 (ISV)**, **"Honor everyone, keep on loving the community of believers."** And the Apostle Paul echoes the same message in **Galatians 6:10 (NIV)**, **"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."**

Why does God insist that we give special love and attention to other believers? Why do they get what seems to be priority in loving? Because God wants His family to be known for its love more than anything else. Jesus told us above, in **John 13:35** (my paraphrase) that it's our love for one another, not our doctrinal beliefs that will be our greatest witness to the world. In heaven, we will enjoy God's Family forever, but first we've got some tough work to do here on earth to prepare ourselves for an eternity of loving. God trains us by giving us family responsibilities and the foremost of this is to practice loving each other, right here in the now. God wants us to be in regular close fellowship with other believers so that we can develop the skill of loving. Love cannot be learned in isolation, we have to be around irritating, imperfect and frustrating people just like ourselves. It's through fellowship that we learn this important truth.

The best use of life is Love. Love is not a good part of our life, Love is the Most Important part. Paul encourages us in **1 Corinthians 14:1 (Message)**, **"Go after a life of Love as if your life depended on it - because it does."** It's not enough to say that one of the things I want in life is to be loving as if loving is on our Top 10 things to achieve list. Relationships must have priority in life, above everything else. Why? Life without love is worthless! Paul makes this point very evident in **1 Corinthians 13:1 (NLT)**, **"If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal."** In the Message Bible, it reads **"I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate"**. Often we act as if relationships are something to be squeezed into our schedules. We talk about finding time for our children or making time for people in our lives that gives us the impression that relationships are thought of as or like many of our other tasks. But God says that relationships are what life is all about. Four of the ten commandments deal with our relationship with God, while the remaining six of them deal with our relationships with our people. So, all ten of them deal with relationships. Fact, Jesus was asked by the scribes in **Mark 12:28 (NLT)** **"Of all the commandments, which is the most important? Jesus' reply was 'The most important commandment is this, Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. The second is equally important, Love your neighbor as yourself, no other commandment is greater than these.'" (Mark 12:29-31).**

So, we all can see right here from the lips of Jesus, learning to love God is our first priority and our second priority should be learning to love others, Love will last forever. Another reason God tells us to make love our top priority is that love is eternal. In **1 Corinthians 13:1-7**, Paul is sharing with us, all of the things love is supposed to look like in our lives. I encourage you all to read those verses for yourselves. After Paul's explanation of God's kind of love, he goes directly into **1 Corinthians 13:8** and tells us, **"Love will last forever."** Now drop down a few verses to **1 Corinthians 13:13** and listen closely, **"So these three things continue forever; faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love."** Love leaves a legacy. How we treated other people, not our wealth or accomplishments is the most enduring impact any of us can leave on this earth. Mother Theresa said, "It's not what you do, but how much love you put into it that matters." Love is the secret of a lasting heritage.

1 Chronicles 26:12-29:30

War plunder rightfully belonged to the victorious army. These soldiers, however, gave their portion of all the plunder to the house of the Lord to express their dedication to God. Like these commanders, we should think of what we can give, rather than what we are obligated to give. Is your giving a matter of rejoicing rather than duty? Give as a response of joy and love for God. (26:27)

The kingdom of Israel belonged to the Lord, not to David or anyone else. Israel's king, then, was God's deputy, commissioned to carry out God's will for the nation. Thus, God could choose the person He wanted as king without following customary lines of succession. David was not Saul's heir, and Solomon was not David's oldest son, but this did not matter because God appointed them. (28:5)

David gave from his personal fortune to the temple. He encouraged others to follow his example, and they willingly did. Both the tabernacle (Exodus 35:5-36:7) and the temple were built from voluntary gifts of the people like David. We can acknowledge that all we have comes from God. (29:14-16) We may not have David's wealth, but we can develop his willingness to give. It is not what we have that counts with God, but our willingness to give it. (29:3-5)

Romans 4:13-5:21

When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, an exchange takes place. We give Him our sins, and He forgives us and makes us right with God (2 Corinthians 5:21). There is nothing we can do to earn this. Only through Christ can we be made right in God's eyes. What an incredible bargain this is for us! But sadly many still choose to pass up this gift to continue 'enjoying' their sin. (4:25)

Paul states that, as believers, we now stand in a place of high privilege. Not only has God declared us not guilty, He has drawn us close to Himself. Instead of being enemies we have become His friends in fact, His own children. (John 15:15; Galatians 4:5) (5:2)

"While we were still sinners," these are amazing words, God sent Jesus Christ to die for us, not because we were good enough, but just because He loved us. Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you. Remember that He loved you even before you turned to Him. (5:8)

Psalms 14:1-15:5

The true atheist is either foolish or wicked - foolish because he ignores evidence that God exists or wicked because he refuses to live by God's truths. We become atheists by practice when we rely more on ourselves than on God. The fool mentioned here is someone who is aggressively perverse in his actions. To speak in direct defiance of God is utterly foolish according to the Bible. (14:1-3)

Some people are so obsessed with money that they will change their God-given standards and lifestyle to get it. If money is a controlling force in your life, it must be curbed, or it will harm others and destroy your relationship with God. (15:5)

Proverbs 19:17-19

Here God identifies with the poor as Jesus does in Matthew 25:31-46. Our Creator, God, values all of us whether we are poor or rich. When we help the poor, we honor both the Creator, and His creation. God accepts our help as if we directly offered it to Him. (19:17)

Refusing to discipline your children will doom the child's future. Look also at Proverbs 13:24. (19:18)

“Foot” Notes

Happy New Year to one and all! As always my resolution for 2017 is that we all continue to grow in our walks of faith. And that we end this year a better, more positive, more grateful and extremely thankful versions of ourselves.

I've come to the conclusion that kind words that are spoken and thrown about carelessly don't cause any damage. In fact, it's the complete opposite. There's nothing more joyful than catching someone off guard with kind words. I get a kick out of people's reactions. My suggestion for you all is to give it a try and you too will be surprised at how many days you will brighten, including your own. May all of you have the where-with-all to slow down enough to take note of all of God's blessings for you this year and to realize in your own ways you are ALL blessings to others.

Love to you all short and tall. Vaya con Dios. P.S. Don't ride faster than your angel can fly.

Overcomer's Testimonies

Hello and God bless you all! I want to talk with you all. I don't know if this is a testimony or what, but I want to believe it is. I'm not sure one way or the other but it seems to me it IS the hand of God. I feel I'm being led and even feel the Holy Spirit told me this is where He wants me to go. How do I start?

Well, I've been in the Lord's care and transforming power, correction and cleansing from all the things that seemed good, but not good for me because they were desires of mine that were on steroids which led to sin and sickness. There were also other things I had in my life that were NOT good at all. At one point the devil had me believing it was all okay. Before too long, I just didn't care and seen it his way. The meth use, crime and porn caused me to not have my thoughts correct about women, sex, and of course hate and prejudice. On top of that I was polluted by so many years of prison life and even more drug use.

Glory to God I am NOT that person anymore! I am a new creation in Christ! It started Christmas Eve 2009. My nephew led me to Christ when I was on the street and then I went back to prison on a violation to Florence West. While I was there I went to church and was even baptized. At that time I prayed this prayer, "Father God I'm a mess. I need Your help. Please clean me up and help me to remove all of the filthiness and evil in me. Come into the rooms of my heart and sweep them clean and replace it all with You and Your goodness."

When I got released I thought I was fixed, but I was wrong. I went right back to drugs and it was like I got even worse. My family had left and moved to Montana before I was released so I was on my own when I got out. My girlfriend and I moved into my mom's property because it was about to be foreclosed on due to being five mortgage payments behind. So, I did crime and got the payments caught up, it seemed, but two days later it was due again. There wasn't any water or electricity there so I was cooking some eggs on a barbecue grill. It was stormy and windy so I moved the grill where the wind wasn't as bad. I had the grill about 5 feet from the wall. All I had was wood 2x4's, so I added a little gas then lit it, cooked my eggs and closed the vents in the grill top and let it burn out. After eating I went inside and went to sleep. I don't know how long it was but I woke up choking on smoke. At first I thought it was a candle but it wasn't. I searched the house looking for the source and found it burning near the laundry room and realized it was from the grill. I ran outside to move the grill and seen that the wall was black with a halo of orange above it. I touched it and it was hot so I quickly thought, "I'll call the fire department."

Instead, I went right in to panic mode and ran to the neighbor's house to use their garden hose and hooked it to mine. That wasn't good enough so I started trying to pull the siding off to get to it. While I was spraying it, I realized it was not working so I screamed to the neighbor to call the fire department. As soon as I looked back at the house I thought I seen a light on but knew I didn't have any electricity. I kicked a hole in the lower part of the wall and shoved the hose inside. As I opened the door and ran inside I seen the room was full of flames everywhere. Grabbing the hose I still tried to put it out but seen it was no use.

So what do you think the next thing on my mind was? I had to hurry and run to my room to get my 'crime bag'. I grabbed the bag and ran outside to hide it knowing the fire department and cops would be there soon. Then I ran back inside to get my clothes. I ran back outside and put them in a block shed next to the house thinking they would be safe. I attempted to go in a third time but came out on my knees coughing from all the smoke. At that point I grabbed my phone and took a picture and posted it on my Facebook page with the caption, "Mom this is your house, I'm sorry." Then the fire department and the sheriff showed up. EVERYTHING burned up, all of my mom's stuff, all of my past away dad's legacy and what little stuff I had. In the matter of a few short hours, I lost everything. I was now homeless and penniless.

I was so distraught that I went even deeper in to sorrow and drug addiction. That's when my girlfriend broke up with me because I know she didn't like seeing me destroy myself. I was now on the streets back and forth between Tempe and Phoenix being a bum. I used a credit card and eventually had warrants out for my arrest so I couldn't even shoplift or go to a shelter. For the next 5 months, I felt like I was starving while only eating ornamental fruit from the trees along the streets. Before long I was hearing voices and to this day I believe they were demons.

Through all of this, I felt God strip away my hate, my pride and my prejudice. He stripped me down mind, body and soul! I was broken. I finally said, "God I can't do this. All I'm doing is making things worse with the crime and desperate acts. I don't want to be tormented anymore. Please have mercy on me, but please don't put me away for another 10 years, have mercy on me." After this I went back to Casa Grande to say good bye to a few people that had helped me. When I was done there I was going to turn myself in and face the 14 class 4 felony forgeries I had stacked up. I knew I could be facing at least 20 years. But by the grace and mercy of God I only received 3 years total.

I'll fast forward ... I went to prison for those 3 years and was page 2'd five months later and received what I thought would be another 5 years. This again was for identity theft and knew it could have been at least another 10 years. Again I received grace and mercy by my Savior! Glory to God!! I could have been looking at the rest of my life behind bars but instead I received 4 years and 5 months TOTAL!

God is GOOD, merciful and loving but He wasn't done yet. From there He put me on a yard with many other Christians and great worship services. After that He moved me to a minimum yard, and not just a minimum yard but one considered to be a 'camp' with no politics. I now realize it is all a blessing from God and I know He is not going to undo the work He has started in me. For four years now, I have been walking with Jesus. Every morning with prayer and thanksgiving I do an early Bible study and church fellowship.

Now I'm getting close to my release and have been trying to make plans for two years to where I would go. With everyone gone from my life I know I am on my own so I have been writing different churches and half way houses looking for some kind of help. I know I'll make it because I now have Jesus and I'm NOT the same man I used to be. I also wrote to you asking you for friendship and mentorship, But I really didn't have any plans to go to your church because I don't know anything or anyone in Mesa. No other churches even contacted me, only you. At that point I went to God in prayer this time not making my own plans but asking His direction for my release. Shortly after this I was lead to a halfway house in Mesa so I asked around and found that your church is not far from there. The train service is in the same area and the job I have lined up is only 7 miles from there and on the train route. Even though I don't know anyone there in Mesa I now know I can get around pretty easily and I'm excited and anxious for my release.

Even though I don't know all of what God has in store for me I know He loves me and has only plans to prosper me and not to harm me. God has only ever showed me love in everything He has done even when He is correcting me. I will NOT return to the same old vomit! Thanks for inviting me to fellowship with you all there at the *Overcomers for Christ* and the Living Word Bible Church. - **D. H.**

What Others Are Saying...

"Thank you for all you do, I received the birthday card, too. It means a lot to me when I receive something from you both and the church, praise be to God. I will be in prison until 2019, Lord willing I'll be able to be with my family, and hopefully go to *Overcomers for Christ* upon my release. I really need to get my life together cause I'm not getting any younger. Someday, I'd like to travel the world like both of you do. I can't wait to be away from here and to one day enjoy seeing the world. God is good all the time." - **M.G.**

"I have recently enjoyed reading one of your newsletters and would like to ask if I could be placed on your mailing list. Please and thank you! I appreciate the strength and peace that your reaching out to inmates provides. It's been an inspiration to bring my walk with God closer." - **R.L.**

"You've been in my prayers both personally and your ministry. A while back, I had stopped sending my tithe to you because there is such a great need right here and it is a great opportunity to share God's love while giving someone basic necessities like soap, deodorant, and toothpaste. God, however, has shown me recently that those are offerings and my tithe is to go to your awesome newsletter ministry. By the way, awesome teaching on Grace last month." - **C.L.**

"I want to let you know I appreciate your ministry and how you reach out to us incarcerated folks. Just hearing our name called for mail is a blessing and I want to thank you. Thank you again for everything the newsletters, prayers, the love you portray through our Savior Jesus Christ. God bless you, your families and your wonderful ministry." - **A.K.**

"Dear *Overcomers for Christ*. I received a beautiful card from all of you there at the *OC* and I'd just like to say thank you very much. It's the only card I received this year. I'd also like to thank you for saying, 'Welcome to the family'. Until now I've only had 2 people in my family to write and not as often as I'd like. But now I have you. And please keep my other family in your prayers. God bless you" - **P.M.**

"I just received a Christmas card from Duck's brother from Ohio. I wanted to reach out and say thanks for the card and send my love and blessings to you all. I appreciate this, you guys are so helpful. I do love how every time I receive letters/cards and the newsletters it makes me smile and feel loved. Thanks, you guys have made an impact on my life. Thank you all, God bless your families. Let's continue to grow and spread the love and blessings." - **M.A.**

"From the heart I really, really do thank you for all the loving work that you all put in to helping others to not give up in faith and life's plans that our Lord has made for me. LORD'S blessing to you." - **A.C.**

"I was introduced to your amazing newsletter by my bunkie and I love it. It gives me the strength to finish up my time by knowing there are others out there like me. I was on a path of self-destruction, having lost everything I owned including my spouse. It was only after reading your October newsletter that I suddenly realized that I can do this and I don't have to do it alone. So, I set out writing courts to set aside verdicts from 10 years ago in order to become program eligible, it worked, they did and I now leave in January of 2017 instead of July of 2017 and I am thriving in the programs I am in. Thank you so much." - **C.W.**



Ministry Tithes & Offerings

It takes the body of Christ working together to create, print, and mail this newsletter. None of this would be possible without the faithful support of many people who believe in this ministry. The vision of this ministry is to offer hope, love, and encouragement to those who are incarcerated. You are investing in spreading the Word of God to lost souls, and encouraging and mentoring believers.

Here is how you can give to the *Overcomers for Christ* ministry:

By **check or money order** – Make checks payable to Living Word Bible Church and in the memo section put "For Overcomers for Christ". Mail your check or money order to PO Box 42023, Phoenix, Arizona 85080

We thank everyone who sows into this ministry. We pray that all that your hands touch will be richly blessed, and that you will have abundance in every area of your life.

Your giving does qualify as a charitable contribution on your taxes. For donations of less than \$250, your cancelled check is sufficient proof for taxes. For donations of \$250 or more, you will receive a contribution statement from the organization. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.

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Angels
Contributed by A.B.

Sometimes I hear a faint whisper so softly in my ear,
It's then that I feel the presence of my guardian angel near.
A touch or a brush of heaven, a closeness beyond compare.
That lifts me to the Father, as I go to Him in prayer.

Oh winged one who enlightens and guards me with a trod,
You stand before the heavenly throne, and see the face of God.
You are my heavenly protector, who is given charge over me.
God made you my companion, to help fulfill my destiny.

What You Going To Do?
By S.F.

Life can be hard, life can be cruel
Life is what you make of it, what you going to do?
Make it tough, make it cool
Run it to the end, what you going to do?

Feel the day, see your life
Keep true to yourself, what you going to do?
Love is God, God is love
God is waiting for you, what you going to do?

The door is open, the door is for you
Enter or not, what you going to do?
Christ died for you, the Holy Spirit is here to guide you
Heaven awaits you, what you going to do?

Do it or not is your choice to make,
While all of us brothers and sisters await
We hope to see you in heaven too,
But what you going to do?

Help us be better stewards by sending your change of address when you move to help reduce unnecessary waste and expense

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