

Christ

August 2014

Overco **Blessed** is the **ONE**
who does not

WALK in step with
WALK the wicked

WAY that sinners take or sit **company**
WAY but whose **delight** is in the **of mockers,**
WAY **whom meditates** **LORD** of the

and day and night. **whom meditates** **LORD** His law
That person is like a tree planted **in** streams of water, which

its fruit in season
and whose leaf
and does not wither
whatever they
do **prosper.**
Not so **the wicked!**
They are like **chaff**
that the wind
blows away.

Therefore **sinners** stand
in the assembly of **the righteous.**

For the **LORD**
watches over
the way of the righteous
but the way of the wicked
leads to destruction.

Psalm One

Psalm One



Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ



March 16, 2014



March 23, 2014



April 12, 2014



April 27, 2014



From Death Row to Paradise Row – Part I

by W.R.

Introduction by Wade Anderson

Introduction: This testimony will be about three parts. It is lengthy and in depth, but it is such a powerful testimony that I felt that the details were important. Part 1 lays the ground work and background of his old life, so make sure to stay tuned for Part 2 and 3 that shows how he became a disciple of Christ and not satan. Just know that the details are not to glorify satan and the old life, but to show how deeply entrenched this man was in that lifestyle. And to show how he was redeemed from that life and God gets all the glory for the transformation that occurred in his life.

I grew up in Ohio. My father was an alcoholic, and he constantly abused my mother verbally and physically. Fortunately for her, he spent more time away from home than he did at home. He met and married my mother in Germany where he was stationed during World War II. He brought her to this country, fathered four children, and then abandoned her and left her to fend for herself while he drank, gambled, and chased women. He was always getting drunk and beating my mother. One night after he had beaten her, I went in to the house and got a shotgun which I intended to use to kill him. I was five or six years old at the time, and the shotgun was too big for me to carry. So, I dragged it out of the house to where my father was, but it was too heavy for me to lift and aim in order to shoot him. I wanted him dead for abusing my mother. As I tried to raise the shotgun to shoot my father, a neighbor saw me and took the gun away from me.

I grew up in poverty, and I'm talking poverty, man. We were so poor we had newspapers glued to the walls to keep the wind from blowing in. I remember going to bed hungry many times and waking up with nothing to eat but bread with sugar on it. We just called it sugar bread. The first thing I ever stole was food. There was a store down the street from us, and every morning the bread and pastry man would leave fresh bread and pastries in this big wooden box that was connected to the store. He made his deliveries early in the morning, and I'd watch him from my window. Every morning he'd fill the box with fresh bread and pastries, lock it, and then leave. I learned to pick the lock with a piece of metal. I had gotten so good at it that I could open it in just a matter of seconds. I was nine years old then. By the time I was ten, I was arrested for burglary and grand larceny.

As a result of that incident and other factors, my brother and I were sent to a children's home where I would stay for the next two and a half years. It was there that I learned to fight and to hate at a very young age. The first week I was in the cottage, I got into a fight, and many more fights would follow. I was only ten years old, but violence was no stranger to me, nor would it be in the years to come, for it would follow me all the days of my life in one form or another. I was always in trouble while I was at the children's home. It began with my first day there. As soon as it got dark, I ran away. Over the course of the next two years, I would run away many more times. As punishment, I would be beaten all over my body with a wooden paddle which left me bruised and bleeding. I would never cry, no matter how hard the blows would come. I would not let them see me cry. My tears would fall in the darkness of my room, at night when no one was around. When I was twelve years old, I ran away and never came back.

Years later, I happened to be in the area where the home was located. For a brief moment, I thought about driving up to the administration building, and walking into Colonel's office, putting the barrel of a twelve-gauge sawed-off shotgun in his mouth, and pulling the trigger. I kept driving, but took the wounds of those beatings with me. They would scar my mind far worse than they did my body, they would carry over into my adult life and my hatred toward authority figures. As the years passed, that hatred would fester and grow like a cancer inside of me.

It would follow me to reform school where punishment for the smallest infraction of rules would be administered with razor straps and physical beatings. A place where the brutality and violence were even more intense and the seed that nourished my hatred flourished and grew as the years passed. It would eventually take me to the prison, where the movie *Shawshank Redemption* was filmed. I walked through its gates in 1966 and for the next two years I lived in the bowels of its hell.

It was much worse than how it was portrayed in the movie. In those days, the living conditions in Ohio's prisons were anything but pleasant. It wasn't about TV's and stereos, getting comfortable, or doing what old convicts call "good time". Ohio's prison system, like most penal systems in the 60's, was not designed to rehabilitate or reform you, it was to control you, to break you down and get you to conform to the policies put in place by the administrative powers in Central Office and the guards enforcing them. The use of dark cells, strip cells, solitary confinement, brutality, and fear tactics were all devices designed and used by prison officials to break you down mentally and physically. A dark cell was nothing more than a 6 x 8 foot cell made of solid steel. The ceiling and walls were all made of steel, designed that way to hold in the heat during the summer and cold during the winter. When the door closed behind you, you were in complete darkness.

I was placed in a cell similar to that after stabbing two guards in the autumn of 1976, and I didn't come out until the following spring. When I came out, I wrote a poem entitled *Strip Cell*.

Strip Cell

Stripped naked and prone upon the floor
The dampness of concrete upon naked flesh
Weary from fighting but you cannot rest
Silence is your companion and despair your guide
And the anger festers deep down inside
The body weakens but the spirit grows
A seed of bitterness within your soul
The rattle of keys turning in locks
Awakens me from my slumber, my driftless thoughts
The silence is broken by the clink of steel
And the anger within me nourishes my will
Steel doors swing open and they enter within

The cruelties of entrapment behind steel doors
Snarling obscenities with a cruelish grin
You know they've returned for pleasure's sake
Bound in shackles with no escape
The silence is broken by a rain of blows
And the cruelties continue but who's to know?
The pain lingers till it touches the soul
And the seed of hatred festers and grows
The fire of vengeance burning within the soul
Nourished with bitterness and made to grow
Like a flame flickering and burning within
The hot coals of hatred burn red with revenge!

There really are no words, however, to capture on paper or in poetry the pain and mental anguish I endured. If all else failed in their attempt to get you to conform, they would send you to the prison in Lima for the criminally insane. You'd be given shock treatments there, and mind-control drugs. Everyone feared going to Lima! A lot of men went there and never came back; those who did were often transformed into emotional cripples. They were never the same. They became broken and defeated men, just another statistic, just more victims of prison. Yet unlike them, I was determined to survive!

The prison system in those days was hard. You did hard time, and that made you hard. In order to survive, you had to be hard. Prison made you hard. It conditioned you to be that way. In those days, when you went to the hole you didn't have the luxury of a mattress, clean sheets, or three square meals a day. You couldn't have soap, toothpaste, or anything. You had the option of either sleeping on a concrete floor or on a steel bunk. In the mornings, you would get two slices of bread and a cup of coffee. You would get the same thing for your evening meal. Every third day they'd give you a bowl of pea soup (without the peas), and every ten days they'd feed you three square meals, let you out to take a shower, shave, and brush your teeth.

You couldn't receive visits or mail while you were in the hole. In those days, all your outgoing and incoming mail was censored. No one could write or visit you except your immediate family and a friend who was approved. The hole was used in those days to break you down physically and psychologically, if that failed, they'd just use brutality. All the guards carried billy clubs, and they were quick to use them. They made their own rules and enforced them through fear tactics and violence.

When I left prison in the fall of 1968, I was like a wild animal being released back into society. Doing the right thing, didn't even enter my mind. As soon as I got out, I got a sawed-off shotgun and went back into the streets to get money. I didn't care who I had to hurt, or what I had to do to get it. I had gotten so bad that I robbed a nightclub around the corner from the police station. I couldn't get any of my partners to go with me, so I paid a guy to help me rob them. I saw a guy robbing a store once, and I followed him home and robbed him. I had gotten so out of control that one of my partners sneaked out of the house in the middle of the night and went up to Chicago just to get away from me. A few years later he would be shot to death during a robbery. I lived my life fast and I lived it hard ... drugs, women, and money were my life. It was my god, and I had my hand in any and everything to turn a dollar and to stay ahead of the game. Only it wasn't a game, it was my life, and I had thrown it away.

The FBI and two other police agencies were looking for me for a double homicide, and I had other people looking for me to kill me. I had made a lot of enemies for the short time I was out of prison. Word kept floating back to me from the streets that they wanted me dead. One night I went to kill a guy. In order for me to get close to him without being detected I dressed up like a woman. I put on makeup, a wig, grabbed a purse, the whole bit. I did that because he was so dangerous that I knew it would be the only way I could get close to him. I put a sawed-off shotgun under my coat, walked up to his house, and waited for him to open the door so I could kill him. Thank God, he didn't open the door, for if he had, I would have killed him. I was crazy like that, man.

I had to cut my own brother because I thought he had beaten me out of some money. I shot another guy's foot off. I put a gun to one guy's head and made him jump out of the car at 50 miles per hour because I didn't like something he said. I had a reputation on the streets as someone who would do anything. I lived on the edge, and I lived by the sword. I always just assumed that I'd die by it, too. That was the life I had chosen. The life I had come to know came to an end in a courtroom in Dayton, Ohio when I heard the judge sentence me to death in the electric chair. I didn't even care, somewhere along the way, I had stopped caring.

I have spent the last 43 years of my life behind prison walls. I spent the first 26 of those years in maximum security prisons in three different states, and the next twelve in close custody. I began my sentence in January of 1971. On

... continued on page 9

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

It's been a while since I've wrote and even longer since we've exchanged words. I can't help but thank you and salute you and the rest of the **DS&S** family for everything that the good Lord is doing through this ministry. You really inspire me and bless my heart when you write me. I know that the Holy Spirit was probably urging you to write me and I'm so thankful. Thank you so much for the card and the words of inspiration, you just don't know how fulfilling those words were, real talk, they were like a sign from the Lord. The day I received the card I had just gotten moved to a new pod. I was just really down because they moved me out of my comfort zone. This new pod that they moved me into I can feel a lot of different and powerful strongholds that satan has on these men. It's like my spirit is always uneasy because of all the cursing, fornication, lusting, arguing and fighting. So, I was just really disturbed, like God, why would You move me to this place? You know what I mean? At my old pod we had a lot of Christian brothers, like you could walk into my pod and feel the Spirit of God moving and working, it was such a blessing. We also had Bible studies every night! I loved it, but now over here it's totally different, it's like, okay, I'm back in prison now. I feel so different being over here out of my comfort zone. It's like satan continues to tempt and test me with all his evil schemes, especially now because he has a lot more influence on these men and they never cease to seek a way to cause me to stumble. But so far, thank God, I've been staying faithful and standing firm. I don't know what God has planned, but I definitely know He has a plan and I'm in it. This could just be a time of testing and strengthening, or just for me to be a light in a dark place, or both. Please pray for me that I can stay strong, unmovable, and incorruptible and also to proclaim/preach the full truth of the Good News, unhindered ... **A.P.**

I still very much suffer with a broken heart. So, I wanted to ask you if you would keep me in your prayers ... **D.R.**

I received your card, thank you, very, very much and God bless you and **Overcomers for Christ**. My biggest fear took place 12/12/2013, my dad passed away. I've not felt quite myself, but I pray that he is with God looking down on me. I am getting ready to transfer out of here to a program in Kentucky. I believe I need a little prayer that I make it and I am trying so hard to be a much better person. I do hold on to the world and it's safe to say I am fighting to not let it go because I believe that I'm needed. It's hard, please pray for me, and keep me deep in prayer I want to change ... **D.L.**

Please pray for me as I wait to find my half-brother. I haven't seen or heard from him since 2001. Also, prayer for my mother that she gets the money she needs for her surgery. Pray for my younger brother that he doesn't fall like me ... **T.P.**

Please pray for my sister, she is struggling, but she is one great woman. She is all I've got, her name is Kathy ... **J.T.**

Praise Reports

God is awesome, thanks for your prayers for my marriage. God is healing together our marriage. Me and my wife are putting God, our Lord Jesus Christ, first in our home and lives ... **D.G.**

I've been a Christian most of my life, not a good one, obviously (LOL). Yes, you can laugh, laughter indeed salves tired old wounds. Like most of us, I backslid, but for me, backsliding nearly became a fine art. It's a very long, drawn out story to be sure, but in short, between December 28th, 2004 and December 31, 2004, I finally gave God a fair shake. No conditions, no strings, no deals. He showed me His power in terms I could understand. Suffice to say, I marked my 9th year clean and sober on December 31, 2013! That's a wonderful praise report on any level, but for me, when one considers that I earned myself a 527 year prison sentence for 18 armed robberies and 2 car-jacking for the sake of a heroin addiction. Its significance attains tangibility to a profound degree. Especially for those who have battled with these particular demons. Rest easy friends, by the grace of God, I now no longer sport an "L", and I'm 12 years to the gate. Praise Jesus!! I'll not only go home just in time to spoil my grandkids, but I'll get off parole in 2030! How awesome is that!! I have many, many other even more astounding examples of God's merciful, loving, kindness for even His exceptionally thick-headed children, but I'll save those for another time ... **D.W.**

Speaking of the old life, it landed me an eight year, four month sentence, a consecutive sentence of 25 to life, with a year enhancement consecutive to the 25 to life. Three sentences back to back. All bad! That was the old life and the old me. My new life and my life as a Christian has turned that all around. As of March 2014, I am no longer a lifer, I went to court and because of the three strikes law that has changed and all the programming and Bible studies I've done, my release date went from October 2036 to August 2016. They knocked off 21 years. I have a little less than 2 ½ years to do before I'm back home. I will have done a little over ten years on this term. That's why I say I'm blessed beyond words, God has a plan for me. God bless you and may the peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be in your heart and life ... **B.C.**

I had great concerns regarding where I might land upon my release, now that my brother had passed. So, I began to pray for God's direction. I prayed, "Open the doors You would open and close the doors You would close and speak to me clearly in this." Doors that I thought would open, clearly slammed in my face, and out of the blue from an unsolicited source an invitation came. A brother out of the Door Christian Fellowship Church in Tempe who had no idea that my brother had passed away or that I was in need and in prayer for such, offered me a room in his home. These are wonderful, godly and loving people whom I have known for many years. Or rather I knew many years ago. Glory be to our King ... Amen ... **A.L.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Reading and Studying the Word of God
By R.A.

As I was reading your article on sowing and reaping a thought came to my mind, so I want to share it with you. This is how I have been reading and studying the Word of God.

After I cried out to the Lord for my salvation on November 27, 1994, I went to a chapel service and confessed what He had done for me and how He had saved me. I found an old Gideon Bible and started to read it. As I read I came across a verse ... **Psalm 55:17** ... *"Morning, noon and night I plead aloud in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice."*

During the first year, I read through the Bible once and **Proverbs** and **Psalms** each month. From the next year until now (19 years later), I have read two chapters in the morning, two chapters at noon and two chapters in the afternoon/evening. Each time I read I lift my voice to the Lord in prayer. Here is how I have been reading:

Morning ... One chapter from the Gospels and one from **Proverbs**

Noon ... One chapter from the Old Testament (**Genesis** through **Job**) and one chapter from **Psalms**

Evening ... One chapter from the New Testament (**Acts** through **Revelation**) and one chapter from the Old Testament (**Ecclesiastes** through **Malachi**)

In this way, a person can read the Old Testament once a year and the New Testament twice a year, the Psalms once every month.

Tithes and Offerings

By A.P.

Acts 20:35 – *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

About the tithes and offerings, God is so good and I really see Him doing powerful, glorious and wonderful things through this ministry and also throughout the world, so I just want to plant my seeds and sow them into the kingdom of Heaven, and to help spread the Good News to the lost and the found. I know that getting the Word out there isn't cheap, but I also know that the blessing of receiving this Word is priceless, so I want to help as many people as possible receive God's salvation through Christ Jesus. I'm blessed enough to tithe, I know I'm living from paycheck to paycheck right now, but even still, God supplies all my needs and He is worthy of all praise! You can sow to the flesh and reap corruption or you can sow to the Spirit and reap life everlasting. It's written. I just pray that God helps multiply my seed for the great and glorious benefit of the expansion of His kingdom. If my tithes and offerings can go towards God's kingdom and help bless others, then I'm already rewarded in my heart, knowing that others are receiving their salvation through the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Repentance

By J.H.

I've taken another step; I finally understand that I don't have to give in to those temptations, small or big. Earlier in my walk I would knowingly sin, then feel bad, then ask for forgiveness and then keep moving forward. It does not work that way. I was cheating myself out of His blessings. The old saying, "Oh well, nobody's perfect," or "He'll forgive me." This is true, but I think that stands more for the babes in Christ.

I know I still have A LOT to learn. I completely understand His message, and repentance is turning from sin. The faster I turn from sin, whatever it may be, my answers will come faster when I pray, as long as it is in His will. My prayers are to have a closer relationship with my kids, for God to make something happen where they can visit me, for my mom to find Jesus and communicate with me, for my sister to find Jesus and visit me, a hedge of protection around my sons and nephews and for my appeal to relieve me of some of this time, for my kid's mother to find Jesus and for us to become brother and sister in Christ, a Christian wife, and a drive to learn His word. The reason I believe that those things are out of place is because of my sin; lust kicks my butt in here, I battle with it, the war's already won, the battle is what's hard. I know He says nothing is uncommon that I go through and He'll always give me a way out ... this is 100% true. I must

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

make no excuses if I want those things to happen in my life, I must truly repent! Thank you for reading this, it helps sharing this with believers because we all go through trials. You know my pain, every time I sin I feel guilty and like I let Him down. I feel this because this is true, but when I win a battle I feel strength, Praise Jesus for instilling the will to change, to become a man of God.

Treasures

By J.W.

I pray this letter finds you all doing well and in good health, trusting in the LORD Jesus Christ with all your heart.

I am serving a 225 month sentence when I should have been life. But I thank God through Jesus and "I am serving life, life for Jesus." I gave my life to the Lord in May of 2009 and have been dying every day since.

A Christian brother blessed me with your November newsletter and told me how much you all there have been a blessing to him, and I want to tell you, you all have blessed me by reaching out to us inside these walls and making the Scripture come to life. Thank you for your love.

I am sending you *Treasures* by Bill Yount because it has blessed so many. If you haven't already got a hold of it, here you go. I pray that it blesses you as much as it does so many.

Treasures

By Bill Yount

It was late, and I was tired, wanting to go to sleep, but God wanted to talk. It was about midnight, but God does not sleep. His question made me restless, "Bill, on earth where does man keep his most priceless treasures and valuables?" I said, "Lord, usually treasures like gold, silver and precious jewels are kept locked up, valuable treasures on earth are also locked up." I then saw Jesus standing in front of seemingly thousands of prisons and jails. The Lord said, "These have almost been destroyed by the enemy, but these ones have the greatest potential to be used and to bring forth glory to My Name. Tell my people I am going this hour to the prisons to activate the gifts and callings that lie dormant in these lives that were given before the foundation of the earth. Out from these walls will come forth an army of spiritual giants who will have the power to literally kick down the gates of hell and overcome the satanic powers that are holding many of My own people bound in My Own House. Tell my people that great treasure is behind these walls, in these forgotten vessels. My people must come forth and touch these ones, for a mighty anointing will be unleashed upon these for future victory in My Kingdom. **THEY MUST BE RESTORED!**"

Then I saw the Lord step up to the prison doors with a key. One key fit every lock and the gates began to open. I heard and saw great explosions which sounded like dynamite going off behind the walls. It sounded like all out spiritual warfare. Jesus said, "Tell My people to come in and pick up the spoil and rescue these." He began walking in and touching inmates who were thronging Him. Many instantly had golden glows over them. God spoke to me, "THERE'S THE GOLD!" Others had a silver glow around them and God said, "THERE'S THE SILVER," like slow motion, they began to grow into what appeared to be giant knights, wearing the entire Armor of God, and every piece was solid gold! Even gold shields! I heard God say to these warriors, "Now go and take what satan has taught you and use it all against him. Go and pull down the strongholds coming against My Church."

These spiritual giants then started stepping over the prison walls, with no one to resist them, and went to the very front line of battle with the enemy. I saw them walk right past the church and big name ministers known for their power with God were surpassed by these giant warriors, like David going after Goliath. They crossed the enemy's line and started delivering many of God's people from the clutches of satan while demons trembled and flew out of sight at their presence. No one, not even the church, seemed to know who these spiritual giants were or where they came from. All you could see was the Golden Armor of God from head to foot. There was great victory and rejoicing. The gold shields and silver and precious treasures and vessels were brought in. Beneath the gold and silver were the people that nobody knew ... rejects of society, street people, the outcast, the poor, and the despised. These were the treasures that were missing from His House. The Lord said, "If My people want to know where they are needed, tell them they are needed in the streets, hospitals, missions, and prisons. When they come there they will find Me and the next move of the Spirit.

Foot's Bible Study Notes

1 Samuel 26:1-31:13

The strongest moral decisions are the ones we make before temptation strikes. David was determined to follow God, and this carried over into his decision not to murder God's anointed king, Saul, even when his men and the circumstances seemed to make it a feasible option. Who would you have been like in such a situation – David or David's men? To be like David and follow God, we must realize that we can't do wrong in order to execute justice. Even when our closest friends counsel us to do something that seems right, we must always put God's command first. (26:8) We may make a great show of denouncing sin, but if our hearts do not change, the sins will return. Knowing what is right and condemning what is wrong does not take the place of doing right. (28:3-8)

When facing problems, remember that it is useless to look for someone to blame or criticize. Instead, consider how you can help find a solution. (30:6)

Heroic spiritual lives are built by stacking days of obedience, one on top of the other. Like a brick, each obedient act is small in itself, but in time the acts will pile up, and a huge wall of strong character will be built – a great defense against temptation, we should strive for consistent obedience each day. (31:13)

John 11:1-12:19

Any trial a believer faces can ultimately bring glory to God because God can bring good out of any bad situation (Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28). When trouble comes, do you grumble, complain, and blame God, or do you see your problems as opportunities to honor Him? (11:4) Whoever believes in Christ has a spiritual life that death cannot conquer or diminish in any way. (11:25-26)

When we choose the way of sin, God may not immediately do anything to stop us, but this does not mean He approves of our actions. What we deserve will come. (12:4-6) Stop now and think about the events in your life leading up to where you are now. How has God led you to this point? As you grow older, you will look back and see God's involvement more clearly than you do now. (12:16)

Psalms 117:1-118:18

Have you ever said, "I can't think of anything God has done for me. How can I praise Him?" This Psalm gives two reasons for praising God, His unfailing love towards us and His faithfulness that endures forever. If He did nothing else for us, He would still be worthy of our highest praise. (117:1-2)

Pilots put confidence in their planes. Commuters place confidence in trains, cars, and buses. Each day we must put our confidence in something or someone. If you are willing to trust a plane or car to get you to your destination, are you willing to trust God to guide you here on earth and to your eternal destination? How futile it is to trust anything or anyone more than God? (118:8)

Proverbs 15:22-26

People with tunnel vision, those who are locked into one way of thinking, are likely to miss the right road because they have closed their minds to any new options. We need the help of those who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. Seek out the advice of those who know you and have a wealth of experience. Build a network of advisers, then be open to new ideas, and be willing to weigh their suggestions carefully. Your plans will be stronger and more likely to succeed. (15:22)

These scriptures reinforce the words that wise actions, wise thoughts, and wise words will always be a delight in the Lord's eyes. Also, that the thoughts of the wicked shall always be despised. As this theme shows up again and again throughout Proverbs, our choice as to what we should do is quite obvious. So really by staying true to God and into His word our decisions become clearer as to what we need to do to make our lives better. If we're cool spiritually, everything else we deal with shouldn't be as hard as we make it out to be.

“Foot” Notes

Hello, everybody!! I was just sitting here watching the tumbleweeds blowing through the vastness of my mind, when I grabbed this thought that was tied to one of those tumbleweeds with a ribbon. It's inevitable that in life you're going to fall down, that's a given. What matters is that you get back up, get back up no matter how many times you should happen to fall. As long as you continue to get back up you can continue to move forward, even if it's just one step. It's one step farther than you were. As ya'll ponder that remember that God loves you all ...

Vaya con Dios. Don't ride faster than your angels can fly.

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January 13, 1972, I was sitting in a cell on death row at the Ohio Penitentiary, awaiting my execution. I was to die that day, but what the state of Ohio failed to realize is that I was already dead. Physically I was alive, but inside I was dead. I was filled with bitterness as I sat in my cell awaiting death. As I pondered my fate, I saw my pending execution as being more merciful than having to spend the rest of my life in a cage. Death would be more merciful. That was the attitude I had while awaiting my execution. I was guilty of murder, and I accepted the state's cry of "an eye for an eye". So be it! I wasn't just going to lie down and die, or walk to my death like a sheep going to be sacrificed upon an altar. I had a shank (homemade knife) smuggled into me from a friend in the prison's general population, and I intended to sink it into the heart of my enemy (a guard) before I died. The way I saw it, I was dead anyway, the guards never let you forget that. Every time you'd be taken out of your cell, you'd be chained up and under a guard escort. They would holler, "Dead man walking," and all movement would come to a halt. My life had come to a halt. When I first entered the walls of the Ohio Penitentiary, I saw engraved within the stone above the gate, "All who enter here leave all hope behind." That's exactly what I did. Prison does that to you. It robs you of all hope. It robs you of your very soul. The prison was 150 years old, and I wondered how many men had walked through its gates and did just that "left all hope behind". I was only on Death Row for a year before the U.S. Supreme Court abolished capital punishment, and my sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

My greatest fear after I came off Death Row wasn't death itself, but life imprisonment. I feared that more than the electric chair or anything else. For I would see old convicts walking the yard who had been in the joint since the 40's and 50's, and you would watch them die. And you'd see a guard putting leg irons on their ankles before placing them inside the ambulance to take them to the morgue. That was my greatest fear that I'd grow old and die behind prison walls, that the last thing I would see on this earth would be guards putting leg irons on my ankles to escort me to the hospital to die or to the morgue. I made up my mind when I came off Death Row that I wasn't going to go out like that.

I was only off Death Row for a few months before I stabbed a guy for disrespecting me. Violence and death were just a part of daily prison life. Prison is satan's house, and he rules in it. There was a time when he ruled in my life, but God has freed me from that prison and from the bitterness and despair that made up so much of my life. For many years, hatred and bitterness were my only companions, and I embraced them as you would a comrade. That's where I drew my strength. I used them as a source of food. They nourished me, they drove me, and they gave me the strength and determination to survive and to go on day after day, month after month, year after year, while I was in prison. As the years passed, that hatred grew and flourished inside the prison walls and inside of me. Prison breeds hatred and despair, and anyone who's lived behind its walls for any length of time will fall victim to it in one form or another. When you're exposed to the violence, brutality, and degradation of prison life year after year, it leaves you hard and calloused. It conditions you to be that way, and too often you have to be that way in order to survive. I was determined to survive and not become just another victim, another broken human being.

Prison

I've watched you kill my brothers, first one then two
 How many others have you slew?
 You cage men's bodies and you steal their souls
 You twist men's minds until they fold!
 And you have a name that you try to disguise
 As rehabilitation and all its lies
 For you're a monster, designed to kill
 Your weapons are hidden in concrete and steel
 And when the brothers stand up
 To rattle their chains
 You always kill them to hide your shame!

Throughout the years I've been subjected to brutality in every form imaginable, physically, mentally, and psychologically. I spent 6 1/2 years in solitary confinement without even going outside or feeling the warmth of the sun upon my face. They came in one day and painted the windows black so I couldn't even see outside. They let me out of my cell twice a week for two hours to shower and exercise. I exercised in a fenced-in enclosure inside the cell block, 4 feet wide and 20 feet long, in leg irons and handcuffs. I had no TV, nothing, but in those days, when you went to the hole or solitary you couldn't have anything. They used those tactics in an attempt to wage psychological warfare, to try and break me down mentally, take me to that mindset in which I would take my own life.

A lot of men who were placed in strip cells or solitary for long periods of time did take their own lives, but their treatment towards me had just the opposite effect. It made me angrier and it just nourished the hatred that was festering inside of me, and it just made me more determined to survive! It was the only thing that kept me alive all those years that I spent in solitary. It tempered my mind and my will like steel. The Bible tells us in ***Ecclesiastes 3:8***, "... ***a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace*** ..." that there is a season, a time for all things, a time to love and a time to

hate, that was my season to hate. I was never going to submit to them. When you inflict pain upon a man, he will do one of three things; he will submit to you, he will flee, or he will stand his ground and fight you all the way to the altar in which he is to be sacrificed. That's how I viewed the prison system, as altars in which men were being sacrificed upon. I was driven by hatred and revenge, and it was taking me to a place that I really didn't want to go, but that's what hatred does. It will take you where you don't want to go and make you do things that you really don't want to do, and satan was taking me to my own destruction. I didn't even care. Not about dying, not about taking another human being's life, not about anything. I had crossed that line, that point of no return!

I never trusted anyone; I would never let people get close to me, for it's those people who are close to you who are in a position to hurt you the most, who will kill you! I've seen it happen many times over the years, so I kept everyone at a distance. I let no one get too familiar with me. I did my time alone. I dealt drugs and for years I used heroin. It was one of my demons. I had connections on the inside and outside of the walls. If you could get it in the prison, I had it ... drugs, booze, and other forms of contraband. In prison I was known as a guy who could make things happen. I was also known as someone who would hurt you or kill you if you crossed me. I was no stranger to violence, for I have been its victim many times throughout the years. I have been shot and stabbed on four different occasions. On two of them, I almost died. One time I had two guys pistol whip me in an attempt to put me in the trunk of their car, so they could take me to an isolated area and put a bullet in my head. On three occasions, I was shot at by the police. On eight others, I had people pull guns or knives on me for a number of different reasons.

I've survived Death Row, shootings, stabbings, 6 years in solitary, and every form of physical and mental abuse imaginable. I even had a demon manifest itself to me one time, and it was the most frightening thing that I had ever experienced in my life, but even that experience didn't motivate me to make any changes in my life. Over the years I had a number of people try to talk to me about God and Jesus, but I didn't want to hear it. One time my uncle (who is a minister) came to visit me when I was on Death Row, and he was trying to talk to me about Jesus and I told him to take his Bible and his Jesus and get out of my face!

At that time, I had an execution date, January 13, 1972 and you would think, if there would ever be a time in a man's life that he'd be open or receptive to anything pertaining to God or religion that it would be under those types of circumstances. But, my heart was so hardened and so calloused that I didn't care about this Jesus that everyone was trying to talk to me about. I didn't even care about myself or anyone else other than my family. I always saw Christians as being weak, and there was no place for anything weak in my life. I was filled with so much hatred that I didn't want Jesus or anyone getting close to me. I was like that on the streets as well as the penitentiary. I grew up on the streets, and I lived by its laws where the gun and knife ruled!

I had a guy run a 13-inch shank through my back one time. In turn, I cut his throat. As a result, we both almost died. It all started over a newspaper, a 10-cent newspaper. When you think about it, it's crazy to stab someone over a newspaper. But prison has its own rules, its own set of principles and values, the same as the streets. It's all about respect, it's all about principles. But the question is whose principles? And we became conditioned by the lifestyle of the streets and prison to live and die by the principles and values of those environments. They became a part of us. No one knows that any better than I, for I lived by the convict code. I would have died by it if necessary.

When I was in Nevada's prison, gang members stabbed a friend of mine (a Mexican dude), and I went to his aid while they were stabbing him. There were three guys stabbing him inside his cell, and one of them had run the blade of a shank all the way through his arm. It was stuck there. Blood was literally dripping from the ceiling. His cell looked like a butcher shop. When I stepped in to his cell, they froze just long enough for me to get him out. They just stood there, looking at me with shanks in their hands. I was covered in blood and I tried to pull the shank out of his arm so I'd have a weapon to defend myself, but it had hit the wall when it went through his arm and the blade was bent. The guys who stabbed him just walked away and a few minutes later, two guards walked around the corner of the cell block and saw me standing over him trying to pull the shank out of his arm. I knew if he died I was going back to Death Row, for no jury was going to believe that I was just trying to help him. I saved his life, but in doing so I passed a death sentence upon myself. I'm white, and it was the Aryan Brotherhood who had hit this dude. The worst thing you can do in the penitentiary is get involved in someone else's business. I had crossed that line by going to his defense and I knew it. The next day I went to them and told them to do whatever they felt they had to do. I waited for them to come to me to kill me. When they approached me, they told me that they could respect the position I took out of respect for me and for what I stood for. They gave me a pass and let me live. My going to his aid was simply a matter of principle. I held friendship and loyalty in the highest regard, and I was taught to never turn your back on a friend. But I had lived by all the wrong principles all my life. They were all I knew. I lived and died by the convict code. I had to fight all my life for one thing or another and I've gone through things and have seen things that no human being should ever have to experience. I've been through the fire, and I've been tested.

When I was transferred out of Ohio's prison system to Nevada in 1978, the prison officials released a statement to the media to the effect that I was the most dangerous convict in Ohio's system. I'm not proud of that, and I want you to under-

stand that, but at that time in my life, it was the truth. I was an animal. I had lived by the sword all my life, but that doesn't take a lot of courage to pick up a weapon and hurt or kill someone. Anyone can do that. It does, however, take a lot of courage, a lot of guts to do the right thing, to stand for those things that you know are right. Anyone can be a sheep and follow someone. That doesn't take courage. The truth is it is weak. I lived by all the wrong principles and values all my life, and I was quick to defend them, to die for them, for they were all that I had. They were all that I had to call my own. They were all that prison had left me with. But I realize now that a man's heart and his courage are really put to the test when he makes the right choices in life, to do the right thing, to stand for the right things, to step up to the plate and serve God. To lay down the sword and pick up the Bible and walk with God takes guts, man. To be a soldier in His army calls for courage, for your heart will be tested. Anybody can be a gangster and I've been around some gangsters, some straight up killers. Your home boy will take a blast from a 12-gauge at point-blank range and you'll say, "Man, that is a gangster" because he survived. But gangster to me is to hang on a cross with spikes driven into your hands and feet, then die and be buried, and raise yourself up from the grave. Now that is gangster!

Overcomer's Testimonies

When I first received your letter I was unhappy with your words. I needed answers and I felt that you did not give them to me. Frustrated/ searching is what I've been doing. Well, it's more like I've been trying to prove God is not Who He is said to be because He had not shown Himself to me. When I stop to really look at my life, I see the milestones. God put a fork in my road and I was so darn prideful and blind to admit that. But deep down I knew. I've felt it. It brings tears to my eyes because I knew God was throwing me a rope to catch on to, a lifesaver to stop me from sinking into my anger under this black water. I refused to look to the surface because I would see the Life Saver there waiting. I had been receiving messages from God but would chalk it up to 'coincidence' or whatever.

I got a new celli like 4 days ago ... my last celli was ... let's just say that as soon as she moved I felt a weight off of my shoulders, a weight of responsibility for the youngster. My thoughts then were, "I don't want to get a celli that might cause me to lose more earned release time because of another 'assault ticket'. My new celli is a real cool chick. Last night she and I talked about God. I told her how I was thinking and feeling. Man, her words were ... it was powerful how she spoke of God and how she knows without a shadow of a doubt that God IS REAL and GOOD and how she came to know that He IS genuine. She is not at all fake like some of them Bible thumping 'foo foos' trying to come up on a square and a cup of coffee. You know? Well, her words really got me to thinking. So it's like God, yet again, sending me answers and life-savers.

Last night I got a card from a woman that I don't know at all and she said her granddaughter asked her to pray for me and she let me know that she was. I started to break down. I was crying because I felt ... defeated. God won this game. I had put it into a notion of "prove Yourself to me". How many signs do I need? It's been one thing after another in the span of two weeks or so. God's telling me to take the blinders off. Maybe seven words of this card from a woman I don't know, who doesn't know me, informing me that she is praying for me, and that "God is able to work with our lives", with tears in my eyes I yelled, "I HEAR YOU! YOU WIN!" My new celli looked at me like what in the world is going on with you? I told her what I just received and she finished reading the card out loud. I can't even explain how I felt, how she and I both felt. My celli said that the presence of the Holy Spirit was in our cell! How I felt emotionally was insane; I was scared, happy, tired and felt relief in my physical body. My heart was in my throat and the tears wouldn't stop running down my face and overall, I was overwhelmed with the experience. I won't and I can't sit and say that I understand the Trinity and Jesus **BUT** I can and will say that, "God has shown Himself to me!" He really never had too, who am I to make demands on God? I'm thinking that He just loves me enough to do that. Feel me? I still feel as if I should do something but I guess read the Bible and pray is all I really can do right now.

Thanks **DS** for giving me this time to share this awesome experience with everyone. Keep me and mine, my celli and her family in your prayers. And let's ALL pray for people like me who are unsure how to believe in God. Thank you. - **C.P.**

Ministry Tithes & Offerings

It takes the body of Christ working together to create, print, assemble, and mail this newsletter every month. We thank each and every one of you who have sown a seed into this ministry. None of this would be possible without the generous financial support from people who believe in this ministry. By sowing your financial seed into this ministry, you are helping us reach out to those incarcerated by offering them hope, love, and encouragement. You are investing in reaching lost souls, encouraging new believers, and spreading the Word of God. **"A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows." – Galatians 6:7**

Any tithes or offerings that you would like to make to the **Overcomers for Christ** ministry, please make your checks or money orders payable to Living Word Bible Church, in the memo section put 'For Overcomers for Christ'. Mail them to Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023, Phoenix, AZ 85080. Your donation does qualify as charitable contribution on your taxes. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.

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Prayer

Contributed by R.A.

The proper way for man to pray,
Said Deacon Lemuel Keys,
And the only proper attitude
Is down upon your knees.
No, I should say the way to pray
Said Reverend Doctor Wise.
Is standing straight with outstretched arms
And rapt but upturned eyes.
It seems to me his hands should be
austerely clasped in front
with both thumbs pointing toward the ground
said Reverend Doctor Blunt.
Last year I fell in Hodgins' well head first
Said Cyrus Brown
With both my heels a-stickin'-up
My head a pointin' down
And I made a prayer right then and there
Best prayer I ever said,
The prayin' - est prayer, I ever prayed
A standin' on my head!!

Make Me an Oak

Contributed by R.A.

An oak has roots both deep and strong,
When north winds lash its limbs.
It stands both firm and stout all through
The range of nature's whims.

Dear God, I, too, have certain roots
But they are frail and weak,
My faith needs thine abiding love
Thy will, not mine, to seek.

Make me an oak not by my might
But by Thy power within,
Give me, I pray, the strength to face
The foes of faith – and win.

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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