

Overcomers for Christ

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Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

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The Greatest Life Change ... A Relationship with Jesus

By M.R.

I grew up in a town in Northern Pennsylvania known as Wiles-Barre. I was raised with three sisters, no brothers, and a great mother. My father wasn't present much, in and out of my life, with a serious drinking problem. I remember, when my father drank, he would become very abusive towards my mother and me. He was a semi functioning alcoholic, a master carpenter and worked most of the life I knew of him as a superintendent in the carpenter's union. My father had little stints of sobriety, and when that happened, he taught me simple things of his trade. During those times of sobriety, it always felt like he was there for me. In those times I thought he was a great father, and then he would get drunk and start beating on my mother and me. My mother took most of the abuse and put up with that abuse for a LONG time. I was about twelve years old when she finally had enough and told him to leave. I didn't see him much after that. Well, from time to time, he would pop up to give me money, buy me a dirt bike, BB guns and other gifts. Then I wouldn't hear from him for months. I knew he only lived about ten minutes away so that made it hard for me to understand why he didn't want to visit me more. This caused me to feel unwanted by him.

For years my anger grew. I just couldn't understand why he didn't want to see me and why he chose alcohol and his night-life over us kids. I grew very resentful, and I held those resentments for many years, until I began to do the same things he had done. Once I started doing drugs and drinking alcohol, I too put those things before my family, my own life, everything! I guess you could say, it took me becoming an addict before I could forgive him. At that point I started to see how the drugs had begun to change me as I was actually becoming a different person.

Let me tell you some things about my mother. I am so thankful for her; she was the best woman I've ever known. She was the best mother anyone could ever ask for. She always had all of us kids' backs. Being a single mother and raising four kids by herself, she worked two and sometimes three jobs while still managing to be the best mom. She never grew bitter or lost her patience with any of us, as she did her best to assume both roles of mother and father. Occasionally she would date someone, and I'd get ugly and eventually run them off. Looking back today, I feel remorseful about those actions and outbursts. But unfortunately, I can't change or undo what was already done.

Our mother loved Jesus, she sent us to a Catholic school, and we were in church every Sunday. Unfortunately, I was unreceptive at the time. I'm sure you're all familiar with the song by Merle Haggard, 'Mama Tried'. Sometimes I think he wrote that song about me, I'm kidding.

Without a father figure in my life, from then on, I rebelled and skipped school. When I did go to school, I was constantly getting in fights with lots of suspensions. At the age of thirteen I began to gravitate towards an older crowd of guys. This new crowd of guys were into all kinds of different things. Things like heavy drinking, snorting pills and stealing from stores. It didn't take long, and I had progressed in my addiction, even faster than the new crew I had met.

It seemed almost instantaneously, I moved on from stealing to armed robbery, ripping off drug dealers and all kinds of rotten things. By the time I reached seventeen I was mixed up in a drug deal gone wrong where I was stabbed. My right arm was nearly severed off. I underwent a surgery called Radial Nerve Transplant. That's where they took a nerve from my right leg and put it in my right arm. The surgeon told me that I may never have full motion or use in that arm. I refused to allow that to happen to me. And looking back now, I see where God refused to give up on me either. Being the knuckle-head that I was, I refused their physical therapy and did my own physical therapy, riding my dirt bike. The doctors and my family tried to stop me, but of course, I wasn't listening to anyone. I would use my left arm and place that motionless arm on the handlebars and drop my shoulder to twist the throttle. I'm not saying that I went about it the right way, but the doctors were surprised that I'd gained back about 80% of the use in that arm. Seeing me move and work today, you would never know that ever happened to me.

In that whole surgery and recovery process I was prescribed oxycontin. As I became "fonder" of the pills I realized that I could go to different doctors and mix them up to obtain MORE pills. That was, until they all cut me off. This was my first time being dope sick. From there I jumped from the pan and into the fire, I started doing heroin. It didn't take long, about one month and I was shooting up. By the time I turned eighteen, I was out of control. I was not only doing burglaries, robberies and being shot at, I stole guns and used those guns to rob whatever and whoever I could. Yes, I was even stealing from my own family.

The law eventually caught up with me for a slew of felony charges. I was booked my first time at the age of eighteen, skinny as a rail and dope sick as a dog. Even at that, in order to get high, I manipulated the psychiatrists to give me all kinds of meds. Whatever I could to escape reality, I did. The only positive thing I did every time I got locked up was to work out. I'd get booked and do my time constantly in some sort of work out. By the time I'd leave prison I'd be 200 lbs., turn right around and get JACKED UP, strung out, emaciated and in two months I'd be back at 150 lbs. I was like a dog that always returned to his own vomit!

As soon as I was out of prison I was back with the same friends, the same women and back to my old ways, robbing and

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destroying everything that I laid my hands on. I'm sure you're familiar with the saying, 'out the gate by eight and in the spoon by noon'. I'd say that from the age of 18 to 34 I've spent 13 of those years in and out of jails, prisons, rehabs, halfway houses, and mental institutions. In the midst of all those years of addiction and crime people around me were overdosing, dying and dropping like flies.

Then, I was in a car accident where my cousin lost her life. I was only hospitalized and after a lot of stiches and casts, I rolled out of the hospital. I've overdosed so many times that I can't even put a number on it. I've been in three different critical car accidents, a motorcycle accident and for some reason I'm still here. I know now that God had saved me for a purpose, His purpose.

Back to my father for a minute. He passed away while I was in one of my prison stays, at the young age of 55. They say he died from a heart attack brought on by his drinking and drugging lifestyle choices. It's sad, but he died in his bed, alone. They didn't find him until 3 days later, only after the neighbors smelled him. He died alone because he chose drugs and alcohol over everything else. All of the years I spent in jails and prisons I was always into some sort of drugs, assaults, and fights. I spent lots of that time in the hole. Solitary confinement does something to the mind, it tries to break you. My poor mother would send me money whenever I asked. I see now where I milked her dry, blowing thousands of her hard-earned money ON DRUGS.

Once I was doing a 3 - 6-year sentence, I called home to talk to mom and found out that she had breast cancer. I was crushed! But what did I do? I used MORE drugs to numb myself as much as I could. Soon after this she underwent a double mastectomy, chemo, and radiation. It seemed she had beat it, for now. After serving 4 ½ years on that 3-6 year sentence, I was released and returned home with a habit. Day one at mom's house I was already dope sick and off to the races. Once again, I hooked back up with an old girlfriend, and started hanging out with the SAME old friends. I was tweaked out one night and broke into a police impound lot. I found a truck with the keys in it and drove it through the gate, only going a few towns over from there. I'd been up for almost 6 days straight. Evidently, I pulled down a one-way street, parked and passed out. When I woke up, I had no clue where I was or whose truck I was in. But I started it up and drove it over to a meth dealer and sold it. The next day they got caught driving it, told on me and here we go ... on parole and on the run, AGAIN.

Before they caught up with me, I packed a bag and hitchhiked to Florida. I got busy and quickly found a job, building houses. I stayed under the radar, somehow, saved my money and even found someone who would co-sing for me on a new Harley Davidson. Shortly after that I quit my job, bailed, and took off across the country on that new Harley Davidson. I always found drugs everywhere, even when I wasn't looking the drugs found me, so of course, I did drugs the whole way across the United States. I was in high-speed chases in four different states, but for some reason was never caught. Please remember, I am not glorifying that way of life. I was out of my mind, and I now realize that is no way to live. I am so lucky to be alive. I put myself in some pretty scary situations where I almost lost my life countless times.

At the end of that trek, I found myself in Arizona. In a short time, I found a job, yes, building houses. After saving up some money I had planned to head over to California. On the way there the Arizona State Police lit me up. After all that I'd already been through I was not about to go back to prison. So, once again, I fled. Of course, they chased me, at speeds of over 100 mph. I really think I could have gotten away if it hadn't started raining. At those speeds the rain felt like bullets on my skin. I was wet, cold, exhausted, and OUT OF GAS. The bike sputtered at a stop light in Flagstaff, and I was surrounded. With helicopters shining lights on me I put my hands up. That's when things took a turn for the worse. They all came running at me like football players, tackling me in a rain gutter wash. That's when they started tazing me, kicking me and punching me until I could barely breathe. With a wet bandana over my face and 10 cops on my back I started to fight for my life. When it was all over, I was battered and beaten, and locked up in the back of a cruiser. From there I was driven to the Coconino County Jail, where I was thrown in a holding cell and later booked. I was now being charged with 4 aggravated assaults on Police officers, felony flight, escape and 5 counts of felony endangerment. I was screwed!

After close to 6 months there in the county jail, they came at me with a plea for 12 years. My public defender told me that was as good as it was going to get. I was sick when I heard what he had to say. That was when I got down on my knees and said this simple prayer, "Please God! I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I've ignored You for this long. I repent for all of the wrong that I've done. Please Lord, forgive me. Please help me." After I got up from praying, I went and called my mom and broke the news to her. She was saddened and sick to hear once again that I was in jail, and we cried together. I told her, for the thousandth time, "I'm sorry mom, I don't know what to do." A few days passed and I called her again. She told me to find an attorney, she would pay for it. I did, and God went to work. After 14 months, there in Flagstaff County Jail, the attorney got it pled down to 3 years in the ADOC.

All during the time that I was in the County Jail I never stopped doing drugs. Whatever and whenever I could get them, I used them. Yes, even after my prayer. I took trips to the hole 3 different times for fighting and abusive language to the staff. This time was extremely stressful due to COVID and constant COVID testing and isolation. On top of all that, my mom broke some more bad news, the cancer was back and this time it was in her brain. They said it was inoperable. She


started her fight when I started my journey in ADOC. Due to the fact that all contact numbers needed to be approved by ADOC I didn't get to call and talk to her for 2 months. A little sidestep here for a moment ... I really don't like to even admit this, but here it goes. I would have other people send her messages like, "Mom, it's me. I love you mom and I hope your number gets approved soon. Would you please send a cash app to this name. I need \$300 for a TV and some sneakers." She always sent the money, but I instead used it on black tar heroin and meth. Sitting here writing this a can't believe what a scumbag I was. You want to talk about regret, shame, and a mixture of other emotions?

PLEASE, if you're reading this and you're doing something close or similar to what I did, let me tell you, you may never forgive yourself OR get the chance to make it up to your family. If it's not too late and they're still around, take it from me and stop while you can. If you've already done something like this and you're trying to forgive yourself, the best way to make them proud is to give your life to Jesus. Stay sober, work hard and eventually they will forgive you. Most of all, it makes it easier to forgive yourself. Back to my testimony.

As mom's number was finally approved, of course I continued to use drugs. Each time that I spoke with her I could tell that she was diminishing fast. I pleaded with God, "PLEASE don't take my mom from me. What do You want from me, Lord?" Soon after that she lost the ability to use the phone or even speak. That was when I went off the deep end! Now that I had no access to pay for my drugs before long, I'd racked up over \$2,800 in dope bills. I refused to check into PC! Truth be told, I wanted them to kill me. I didn't have the nerve to kill myself, so I was thinking someone else would do it for me. Because I was always getting into fights, I had to keep my head on a swivel.

Right here is when the 'heads' on the yard found out about how much money I owed and were about to grant the green light. That's when God intervened and sent, we'll call them Joey and James, both Christians, inmates in leadership positions. They pulled some strings and got me moved to another yard, there at Red Rock. When I arrived there, I was shocked to see how this block was running. If you are not aware, AZ prisons are segregated, each race separated with minimal interaction. Not this yard, everyone was together and close to 95% of the people were sober and in some sort of schooling, Bible studies, or drug or alcohol program. The moment I walked in there I could physically feel peace and love. Instantly I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as I was greeted by my new Christian brother, 'Joey'. That was when he told me, "Mike, forget about the money you owe, we will take care of it. But here is what I want you to do. Stop getting high." WHAT! What's the catch, I asked? He said, "There is no catch. You're with us now." I thought to myself, who is 'us'? Was 'us' the Christian brothers, Bible bangers, and Jesus freaks? I laugh as I write this because I used to think of these names as insults, but today I see them as badges of honor.

Right there is where I started my journey of sobriety. I'll admit, it was pretty rocky at first. I was sick as a dog, and I slipped numerous times. But I held on to the brothers that were there for me and pushed on. So many men there helped me as we had Bible studies 3 nights a week, sometimes every day. With the rooms filled with lifetime criminals and once hardened convicts we sang at the top of our lungs, cried together and shared stories about how Jesus saved us. It was truly the Saul to Paul transformation! When I tell you that this particular prison was on fire for Jesus, I can say I've NEVER seen anything like it.

It was December and my mom had taken a turn for the worse. She was now bed ridden and had to have Hospice there to help her. The pressure on her brain kept her from speaking. I was broken. On December 28th, which was the 5th anniversary of my father's death, I signed up to get baptized. Sad to say but I'd relapsed the night before, but for some reason feeling sober. As I entered the chapel, I seen the man that had come to baptize us. It was none other than the founder of this  newsletter, 'Duck'. He was wearing an orange vest, to match us men. Here was this big, bearded biker about to dunk me, and not even I knew it would change my life forever. He asked me some questions about Salvation and my commitment to Jesus and baptized me in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Down I went! After I dried off, I went and thanked him for coming to baptize us and went back to my block. On the way I lit up a cigarette and it tasted different. As I took another drag God spoke to me for the first time, that I understood. That was when I felt in my spirit, "This is not for you anymore." I threw away the cigarettes and never, to this day, lit one up again. That was the day that years of sin, addiction, shame, guilt and abandonment washed off of me! Almost instantly I lost the desire to do drugs and alcohol. From there, I only wanted to help bring other people to Jesus, a desire I never had while I was using drugs. The very same day my dad died because of his addictions; I was healed of the addictions I had!! Praise Jesus!

I called my mom every day that I could. I had my sister put the phone up next to her ear and I would tell her "I love you Mom". I told her what Jesus was doing in my life and what a great mother she was. I did this up until January 18th. That's when I got a message from the Chaplain, that one of my sisters wanted me to call her. I called my sister, and she gave me the news that mom had passed. Right there I got down on my knees and prayed, "Lord Jesus, thank You for receiving my mother into Your kingdom. Please give me the strength to get through this. Please fill me with Your peace." Instantly I felt the tingle of the Holy Spirit, an overwhelming physical tingle and warmth from my head to my toes. Then my body felt like

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Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Take Time to Recharge

By G.P.

Overcomers for Christ family today is a blessed day. After months of not getting any mail. I finally got a card from ya'll. I have been somewhat of a lazy person for a while, you might say I was taking a break! What I didn't know is whether or not God would be happy at me for being lazy. Then I got your card... low and behold, thereon the front of the card is the Care-giver's prayer:

Father, today I come asking for a fresh wind of grace from you. Lead me and guide me in this time of caregiver for the one I love. Let me gather strength from you hour by hour. Let me gracefully take assistance from others when they offer. Grant me the wisdom from you for any new issues I may face today. Remind me when I need a break, so I can take care of myself as well. May I remember that I will sometimes get tired and the only perfect caregiver is you. In Jesus' Name Amen

So, in answer to my taking a "lazy day" to myself, YES! You can't do God's work on a foggy mind!! Thank you for the timing my family and remember that we all need some time to ourselves here and there. Don't try to be Ultra Tony for he is one of a kind ... LOL.

Psalm 61:2 - "From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Our Bible

By M.D.

My fellow Overcomers for Christ; Do you realize that millions of people today are desperately searching for a reliable voice of authority? I must tell you that the Word of God is the ONLY real authority we have. His Word sheds light on the human nature, world problems and human suffering. But beyond that, it clearly reveals the way to God.

The message of the Bible is the message of Jesus Christ, who said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* (John 14:6) It is the story of Salvation; the story of our redemption through Christ; the story of life, of peace, and of eternity.

Our faith is not dependent on human knowledge or scientific advance, but upon the unmistakable message of living Word of God. The Bible has a great tradition and a magnificent heritage containing 66 Books written over a period of several hundreds of years by many different men. Yet the message, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, is clear throughout its pages.

Yes, the Bible is old, yet it is ever new. It is the most modern Book in the world still today. There is a false notion that a Book as ancient as the Bible cannot speak to our modern needs. People somehow think that in an age of scientific achievement, and advanced technology where knowledge has increased more in the past 25 years than in all preceding centuries put together, this ancient Book is out of date. WRONG!!

To all who read, follow, and love the Bible, it is the most relevant for our generation. It is in the Holy Scriptures that we find the answers to life's ultimate questions: "Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is the importance of my existence?" One of the greatest needs in the Church today is to come back to the Scriptures as the basis of authority, and to study them prayerfully in dependence on the Holy Spirit. When we read God's Word, we fill our hearts with His Word as God is speaking directly to us.

Mr. William Lyon Phelps, called the most beloved professor in America, and one time president of Yale University, made the often-quoted statement, "I thoroughly believe in a University education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without a Bible."

One of the greatest tragedies today is that, although the Bible is an available, open Book, it is a closed Book to millions – either because they leave it unread or because they read it without applying its teachings to themselves. No greater tragedy can befall a person or a nation than that of paying lip service to a Bible left unread or a way of life not followed. The Bible, the greatest document available for the entire human race, needs to be opened, read, believed, and applied! One survey I'm aware of indicates that only 12% of the people who say they believe the Bible actually read it every day; 34% read it only once a week, and 42% read it only once in a while.

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Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Thanks to my stepmother, Francine, who's current battle with cancer inspired me to write this article. Please pray with me my Overcomers for Christ family, that she wins her battle and shames the devil with her victory! Now, let's ALL get back into our Bibles!

Investment of Time

By J.S.

Overcomers for Christ family everywhere. I'd like to deliver this admonition for you all. First, I guess I should define what admonition means from the dictionary ... 1. To reprove gently. 2. To warn. 3. To urge earnestly – admonish – noun. Next, I'll use the word exhortation and what its definition is, to incite by appeal or argument, caution; admonish. Exhortation – noun 1. The act of exhorting. 2. Language designed to arouse to a laudable effort; admonition.

We, as believers, must INVEST in the time it takes. Invest time in each other so that we can remain a community of believers together. Notice how the word 'unity' is in the word 'community'?

Any relationship worth being involved in takes 'time' to cultivate and grow. We all have enough 'time' to invest in each other. Time well spent on wholesome worthwhile aspects of our lives is surely not time we will ever regret spending, or ever wish to be refunded. After all, in reality, we all know our time is 'non-refundable.' We often forget that once time has been spent or used up there is no getting any of it back.

I assure you beloved brothers and sisters, that to dig deeper and deeper in and through the Word of our Father and Creator, IS TIME WELL SPENT! And surely, it's time well spent, when we wisely and accurately share our Creators words, wrapped in His love and guidance with others. After reviewing my time through the 'Pandemic', it was never downtime! It was time well spent!

Our Father's Word is the most valuable asset we could 'purchase' with our limited amount of time currency that we do have at our disposal. Our Father has gifted each of us with 'time', therefore, as good and faithful stewards of this precious currency, I exhort you all, beloved brethren, to spend wisely to love, learn, share and grow.

This time spent will be worthwhile as there are lifetime lessons to be learned! Lessons we, as maturing Christians can pass on to our young ones, children and loved ones. And believe me, these passed along lifetime lessons are probably a valuable commodity that we could even take beyond the grave. Think on how your loved ones will benefit from your time well spent in your relationship with God and your time in His Word. So, when you've shared what you have learned in God's Word, you've spent your time wisely. Love to you all, big and small.

Tested Genuineness

By J.H.

First and foremost, all praise to the Most High! ALL glory goes to Him who has called us out of the darkness and into His great and beautiful Light!

The peace that surpasses all understanding truly is a sacred gift of His perfect plan, He's covered every single base!

Look here in **1 Peter 1:7**, *"These have come so that the tested genuineness of your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."*

The two words that stand out to me are 'tested genuineness'. Everybody wants and needs real people in their life. Sometimes we go for years without knowing if a certain person is really in our corner, so to speak. In our faith adversity seems to be critical. Through adversity true followers of Christ can keep being that city on a hill, that salt. That's when we can rest in that peace that passes all understanding. It's through that adversity that we find a better way to minister to younger believers and non-believers. Jesus is perfect in His wisdom!

Foot's Bible Study

Daniel 2:24-4:37

Daniel did not use his success to promote his own self-interests. He thought of others. When striving to succeed or survive, remember the needs of others. (2:24)

Are you ready to take a stand for God, no matter what? When you stand for God, you will stand out. It may be painful, and it may not always have a happy ending. Be prepared to say, "If He rescues me, or if He doesn't, I will serve only God." (3:12)

One of the most difficult lessons to learn is that God is sovereign. He is above all of those who are above us. He limits the power and authority of all the government, business, and religious leaders in the world. Those who live in freedom and with a relatively high degree of autonomy find this difficult to understand. While we may feel as though we are free to do what we please, God is sovereign over all of our plans and desires. (4:17)

1 Peter 4:7-5:14

It is not shameful to suffer for being a Christian. When Peter and John were persecuted for preaching the Good News, they rejoiced because such persecution was a mark of God's approval of their work. Acts 5:41, "The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus." Don't seek out suffering, and don't try to avoid it. Instead, keep doing what is right whether or not it brings suffering. (4:16)

Psalms 119:81-112

The stability of the universe or the heaven, mirrors God's faithfulness, love, and care. But even more important, it reflects the permanence of God's laws and the facts that the universe serves Him. (119:89-91)

God's Word makes us wise, wiser than our enemies and wiser than any teachers who ignore it. True wisdom goes beyond amassing knowledge. It is applying knowledge in a life changing way. Intelligent or experienced people are not necessarily wise. Wisdom comes from allowing God's teachings to guide us. (119:97-104)

Proverbs 28:15-16

Those in authority will stay in authority longer when they are honest, not corrupt, and do not oppress the people they are in authority over. Don't let the power of authority cause you to become evil. (28:16)

"Foot" Notes

Hey, Overcomers!

Just recently I received, in my opinion, the greatest blessing a father could receive. Not only are my children believers in Christ and chain breakers but my grandchildren are believers, too! My two oldest grandchildren, Gretchen and Matthew, just got baptized in November. Those of us who've lived lives of crime and addiction on this side of the fence can hold on to the hope that when you become an example of a believer it means something to your heirs. Trust me when I tell you that I take no credit for my children and grandchildren becoming believers that is all God's work in my family. That being said my heart is at ease knowing that with the way things are in the world right now my children and grandchildren are safe within the arms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Lord, I ask that you reach to all of the heirs of the Overcomers inside and out and open their eyes to your grace, mercy, and promises as you continue to grow your kingdom. Amen!!

Love to y'all, short and tall ... Vaya con Dios ... Don't ride faster than your angels can fly!!

it was wrapped in a warm blanket. I felt peace and strength beyond any human understanding. At that moment I was 100% convinced that Jesus Christ was REAL! I guess I always believed but sometimes, in the back of my mind I also had some doubts. But not after this day.

I realized that day that Jesus had been with me this whole entire time, He's always had my back. I'm alive today because He wants me to share my story. He made me a warrior that day and I'm eternally grateful. What a loving perfect God we serve! After mom passed, I engulfed myself in studies. I began to devour the Word as the Scriptures began to leap off the pages and into my heart. I studied and earned my GED, took trade classes, led Bible studies, and helped the other still broken brothers around me. God allowed me to experience all of my craziness so that I would be better prepared to help other people.

Then, one day I was called into my counselor's office where she told me that I was being released on December 7th. I was shocked because I knew that I had warrants out of Pennsylvania. But she told me I was good, that she didn't see any warrants. She asked me where I wanted to get dropped off, but I had no clue where to go. I asked her to give me a day or so and I would get back with her. I went back to my block and consulted with my Christian brothers. We prayed together and it seemed like I prayed all night, "What should I do Lord?" In my heart I knew what He wanted me to do. He wanted me to go back to my counselor and ask them to please call Pennsylvania, that was the right thing to do. Instead, I convinced myself that Pennsylvania must not want me. I had an old *Overcomers for Christ* newsletter, so I looked in there and seen the address was Mesa, Arizona. That's when I went and told my counselor I wanted to go to Mesa. When I was released, I was dropped off at the parole office, homeless, with the \$250 I'd earned from working in prison. I know right, instead of owing money I'd saved money!

After walking into the parole office and meeting my new parole officer, he asked me, "Where are you going to live?" At that point I didn't have a clue. I was from Pennsylvania and didn't know a single soul in Arizona. He looked at me a little stressed out, but after a few calls he found me a half-way house in that area. Leaving prison, I took the phone number from the bottom of the pages of the *OC4C* newsletter with me. I called and it was 'Duck'! I told him who I was and that he had baptized me in Red Rock, that I wanted to be a part of Living Word Bible Church and get involved in the OC4C ministry. That very next Sunday he and his wife met me at the Mesa campus. They immediately introduced me to so many people and I filled my phone with Church contacts. It was crazy how much I felt like I belonged there. The pastors prayed over me for great job opportunities, strength, abundance and so much more. After all of that "Duck" and his wife took me to eat a great barbeque dinner before they dropped me off at the half-way house.

The next morning, I went to work for a temp service agency. After one week of working there, I was sent to a new job site. After working there for just one day the senior superintendent approached me and asked me if I wanted to work for them exclusively? I accepted his offer and immediately started making good money. They were paying me \$30 an hour, with as many hours as I wanted to work. I worked hard somedays 10-12 hours, up to 60 hours a week. I went to church most Sundays, continued to read my Bible, listened to worship music, and fellowshiped with my new God found family. Remember the Pastor's prayers?

Staying in contact with 'Duck' we soon became good friends, more like family to me though. He became like a father figure to me, always had good advice and direction. From there he took me under his wing. An amazing person. I'm so grateful for him and his wife. The closer we got we realized that we both were carpenters, we loved to ride motorcycles and our birthdays were only 3 days apart. Tell me that isn't God! Whether we were on the phone or in his shop he always talked to me about Jesus. I could just feel how real Jesus was when we talked. I guess what I'm getting at is, no matter where you live, man or woman, God has a family for you to experience. I'm not telling you to get dropped off in Mesa and call 'Duck'. What I am telling you is to have faith in God, find a good church to attend, get plugged in, work hard, stay sober and allow the Lord to guide and direct your steps.

Remember, with God on your side, your past doesn't matter, and your felonies don't matter. There is so much work to be had when you truly want to work and make the changes in your life. There are good paying jobs, and blessings around every corner. Please believe me, God blesses hard work, I'm living proof of that. Let's finish up the testimony.

I moved out of that half-way house and found a room for rent. I quickly saved up my money and bought a vehicle and had pretty much everything I needed to succeed. After 3 months of hard work, I had a vehicle, was buying a motorcycle from 'Duck', and more clothes and sneakers than I probably needed. I had money in the bank, my credit was on the rise, I had a great job, God was blessing me with so much peace, abundance and so much more.

Then, one night after work I was headed to meet 'Duck' to experience my first revival, a Christian Revival that Living Word was hosting. It was a Thursday night, and I was excited to get there, hear a great word and maybe even help him baptize some people. That was when I was pulled over for a simple traffic violation. I'll admit, after not driving a vehicle for 10 years I was a little rusty. They ran my name and those warrants from Pennsylvania popped up. You remember, the ones

that God placed on my heart to go and have my prison counselor double check, but I didn't!! Yep, Pennsylvania wanted me, I was never supposed to be released. God warned me and I should have been more persistent in following His lead. Brothers and sisters, if you even have an inclination that you have outstanding warrants ANYWHERE, don't make the same mistake that I did. Write those places, call them, put in motions. One in particular that works is an Interstate Agreement on Detainers Act. If you don't uncover whatever is still there, I can promise you it will come back to bite you in the butt.

You have no idea how much of a disappointment this was. To have everything finally going right in my life, and then to have this pop up. After they arrested me, they took me to the Maricopa County Jail. This was by far the worst county jail I'd ever been in. Thank God I finally knew that He was still there with me and wouldn't leave me through it all. With God's help I stayed sober while I waited for extradition to Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania came and picked me up after 2 months. When I arrived in Pennsylvania, I sat there for 6 months before I had my final hearing. Pennsylvania gave me another 2 years. I hope you understand that I'm writing this testimony, in a cell, at my desk and I'm full of peace, strength and the Holy Spirit. I thank God for every day that I am sober. I thank Jesus for never leaving me or giving up on me. I thank Him every day that I have a release date, because I know that some of you brothers and sisters don't have that luxury.

Let me encourage you to not give up on God, He is full of mercies. And even with all that I've written, I'll be released in 2025. Tell me that isn't God! I got sober on the anniversary of my fathers' death. I was released on the anniversary of my mother's going home to be with the Lord. God is so loving! He took a man like I was, turned my heart of stone to one that now beats with the love of Jesus, and I'm getting stronger and stronger by the day. I'm a new creation in Christ Jesus! Let me assure you, He is no respecter of persons. Meaning, He's done all of this for me, He wants to and will do it for anyone that surrenders their life to Him, no matter what you may have done! Now that's love. You can trust God. Allow Him to guide your life. Read His Word, listen to Holy Spirit as He leads you, work hard and love even harder. And just as importantly, God will NEVER give up on you so don't give up on yourself.

I want to thank you all for taking your time to read this testimony. My hope is that this touches one person for the glory of God. I also want to thank 'Duck' and his wife for their true friendship. I thank God for the **Overcomers for Christ** ministry! I want to thank my sisters for always having my back, and taking care of our mother when I wasn't there. I want to thank all of my Christian brothers at Red Rock for picking me up when I was at my lowest and helping me make the greatest life change ever, a relationship with Jesus!

God bless you all! Always remember, it's NEVER too late to make a change to follow Jesus. Jesus is alive and He loves you very much!

FUN FACTS

Tony Gonzalez, tight end, made 1,325 receptions in his seventeen-year NFL career, second only to Hall of Fame wide receiver, Jerry Rice's all-time record of 1,549.

Christian Comedy

A three-legged dog walks into a frontier saloon, sidles up to the bar, and announces, "I'm looking for the man who shot my paw."

Quote Worthy

"Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish."

– John Quincy Adams (1767 – 1848) an American statesman, politician, diplomat, lawyer, and diarist who served as the sixth president of the United States, from 1825 to 1829. He previously served as the eighth United States secretary of state from 1817 to 1825. During his long diplomatic and political career, Adams served as an ambassador and also as a member of the United States Congress representing Massachusetts in both chambers. He was the eldest son of John Adams, who served as the second president of the United States from 1797 to 1801.

WORD OF THE MONTH

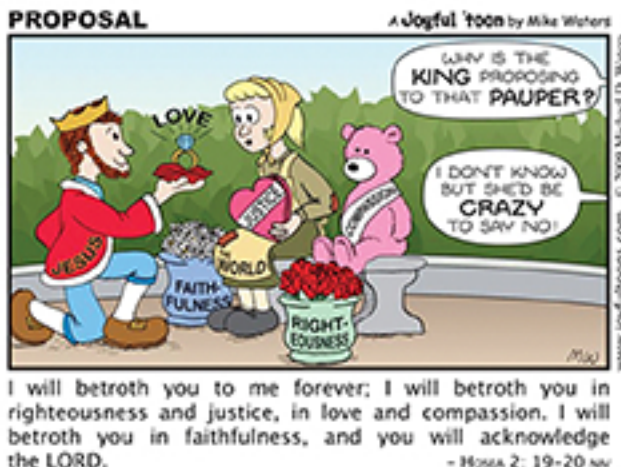
Consanguineous

Pronunciation – kăn-san-gwi-ně-əs

Adjective - 1: of the same blood or origin; specifically, descending from the same ancestor

"The two longtime friends were amazed to discover that they were **consanguineous** fifth cousins."

Did You Know ... **Consanguineous** is part of a family of "blood" relatives that all descend from the Latin noun *sanguis*, meaning "blood". Some of these relatives are found on the literal branch of the family tree, as *exsanguination*, a term for the draining or removal of blood. Others are on the figurative side of the family, such as *sanguine*, a word that can mean "bloodred" or "ruddy" but that is more often used with the meaning "cheerful" or "optimistic". There is also *sangfroid*, a French word, literally meaning "cold blood" that was borrowed into English to refer to self-control under stress. **Consanguineous** relies on the "kinship" sense of blood, bringing together *sanguis* with the Latin prefix "con", meaning "with", to form a word used to describe two or more people that descend from the same ancestor.



ATTENTION

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Editor's Note

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Hello everyone! We are working with Andrew Wommack Ministries, Charis Bible College, to have their books and Inmate Bible Study (IBS by mail) available to ALL of you that are currently incarcerated. This is **FREE** of charge! Each month when you write they will ship your requested book, **FREE!**

To obtain these materials in either English or Spanish you simply need to write: **Andrew Wommack Ministries - P.O. Box 3333 Colorado Springs, CO 80934-3333** and begin to grow even deeper in your relationship with the Lord. Get started today, your walk will never be the same!

Living Word Bible Church Locations

Mesa - 3520 E. Brown Rd. Mesa, AZ 85213 Ahwatukee - 14647 S. 50th St. #165 Phoenix, AZ 85044
Scottsdale - 8551 E. Anderson Dr. #105 Scottsdale, AZ 85255 Gilbert - 202 S. Gilbert Rd. Gilbert, AZ 85296
Phoenix - 3525 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009 Español Mesa - 3520 E. Brown Rd., Mesa, AZ 85213

Ministry Tithes & Offerings

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

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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Taken Heed

By C.J.

Righteously is how I try to live,
always having pleasant words to say and give.

The Lord is inside of me,
and I make it a point to tell everybody.
I spread the Gospel faithfully,
letting others know the path to eternity.

Jesus died for us all,
And it's time we take heed of His call.
The time know one knows,
but the Lord is only taking those with the spiritual glow.
Because judgment day could be tomorrow,
and then non believers will forever dwell in sorrow.
However, they have the chance, to seek sincere
repentance.

I'm a living example of a New Birth,
Blessed and ready to leave, this wretched earth.
And there's charity in my heart,
thus I want to be the light, so I can help others escape the dark.
My walk and my talk, convey my spirituality,
of a man trying to live sin-free.

I'm just a humble servant showing my loyalty
to the highest form of royalty, our Majesty,
Jesus, the One in whom we must believe.

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

EDITORIAL Wade "Duck" Anderson, Michelle Anderson **ART & DESIGN** John Dobbins **PRINTING** Living Word Bible Church

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