

## INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I was in a restaurant to meet with the President of Wornick Foods to talk about my returning to work for the company. It was a successful meeting and it meant I would be achieving several goals: professionally, I would have a position that others would admire; financially, I would be earning more money than I ever imagined; and personally, this would allow me to help better my family. I was married to a wonderful woman, had three beautiful daughters, a lot of friends, and had just secured a dream job. As I left the restaurant, feeling overwhelmed by it all, I began to cry. But I realized I wasn't crying because of what had just happened. In all honesty, I felt empty inside. I was ate up with the feeling of being so undeserving of anything good happening to me.

I had pastored a church for fifteen years and I had worked in a leadership role in business for twenty plus years. According to all the usual measures, my own life had been very successful. But on the inside there was something missing. It wasn't salvation. I had trusted Christ as my personal savior twenty years or so before that. I was seeing a lot of people that I knew, (Christians and non-Christians alike) that were realizing that something was missing from their lives also. So I decided that I had to do something different or I was not going to make it. I began a process in my life to look at what was really going on. I began to think about the emptiness that was in people's hearts, the emptiness that was truly in my heart. I realized that what was missing is the peace, completeness and contentment that allows us to live our lives with joy and fullness.

Hope is something all of us need, Hope for Time and Eternity is the story of me finding peace and consequently the hope for us to live complete lives today and tomorrow. There is nothing worse than to live life without hope. Hope for Eternity is pretty easy, because of the lovingness of a wonderful God that gives eternal life freely. On a Friday night in 1987, at the age of 20, I settled the question of eternity when I received Jesus Christ as my personal savior and asked him to forgive me of my sins. I received the gift that God had given me.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16*

*But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1:12*

*He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son if God hath not life. 1 John 5:12*

That night I became a child of God, I was accepted in the Beloved, and from that point forward I was eternally secure.

I began to think about how people are programmed to believe that if we do all the right things we'll be happy living "the American dream" and how people are told that if we get saved all of their problems will be over. What I found was that both of those things were a lie. If we trust Jesus Christ as our personal savior all of our eternal problems are over but we still need to learn to live for Christ in time (this life). Get the "American Dream" and be successful and most people still find something lacking in their life. What we need to realize is that we still have to live in this life and realize how your life affects and touches other people.

By the time I turned 40, in spite of the fact that I had everything in my life that should have made me happy, I was filled with hurt, frustration, emptiness, fear, and loneliness which drove darkness, depression, and anger. I could be in a room full of people and still feel alone. I was successful but wasn't able to enjoy it. I had folks who loved me but I couldn't believe it. I didn't believe and so couldn't accept anything that was real or good. I found reasons to be unhappy on the inside and was privately angry much of the time. That is where I was, alone with no hope and no joy; that is what I felt and I had a big problem inside of my heart and mind.

My wife, Tammie, was one of the very few people who saw this dark, depressing, lonely, and frustrating part of my life. Because of my pain she was put in the impossible position of loving someone who truly felt they were unlovable. One time Tammie asked me what she could do to help take away some of the pain. My answer to her was that all I wanted was for someone to love me.

As I began to look at my life, I began to look at my past to figure out what was missing on the inside. I began to realize that I had spent my life in hiding from who I was. I realized that I was putting on the face that I thought everyone wanted to see and needed to see in order to love me. I was subconsciously doing things in order to get people to love me. I was living my life for others just like I was told to do but yet I was doing it so people would love me not because I loved them. No matter how much I did and how much people loved me I was still empty and hurting. The validation that others gave was never enough to fill the emptiness that I was living with. What I have come to realize over the last seven years is until we are able to see ourselves as loveable we can never believe what others say because of the perspective we have of ourselves.

As I began to look back at my past and the other things in my childhood that made me what I was I realized the circumstances that had brought me to this point in my life. I started to realize just how much my past had dramatically affected my life. I knew that I needed help but I had to acknowledge and accept that where I was in life was not where I wanted to be. We have to first admit there is a problem and that we are dissatisfied with where that problem has brought us before we can find a starting place to getting help. Doing the same thing we've always done will get us the same result we have always got and it will certainly keep us in the same place we have always been. To get help emotionally in order to find a place where we can truly live a life of joy and happiness takes work. We have to get past the lies that were told to us by others, by culture and religion, and most of all the lies that we told ourselves for years and years. Whether we recognize it or not we have been burdened with those lies. During this work I have realized that those lies live on from generation to generation until someone has the ability to break them by the truth.

In this book I would like to take this opportunity to tell you my story; a story about how I came to accept my life, my worth, and my importance as a person. Through hard and sometimes painful work, with the help of a loving God, a longsuffering, loving wife, very special friends and countless others, I am now able to live a life filled with joy and peace. Through my story I would like to give you the opportunity to understand that there is hope in this life we call time and also there is hope in the life to come in that which is called Eternity.