

## Testimony Revelations 12:11

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Someone said I have a story to tell.

Revelations 12:11 And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” This is my story, in short.

I would like to share my testimony today, for I was lost but now I'm found, Was deceived but now I've been received, was rejected but now I'm accepted. I grew up what I thought was a normal childhood. Played sports from the time I was about seven T-ball grew into baseball, and little league football became varsity football and I eventual played soccer. I went to school even graduated high school. Surprised? Joined the military after high school and after six years of service received an Honorable discharge along with two metals and 5 ribbons. Eventually a started working at a computer company and worked there for twelve years. But after working there eight years I was in a fatal car accident and did not know I was facing a fifteen year prison sentence.

What went wrong? How about my sin nature.

Deep down inside I wanted to be accepted, but I did not think I was. So I tried to fit in with other guys around my neighborhood and eventually in the military. It seemed if I would drink with them we could all laugh and be accepted. I first found this out when I drank 5 beers at the age of twelve with my cousins. That was not good I eventual through up. You would think that would have been a good sign to stop, but it was not. It started off slow, drinking here and there. But after I joined the military it was on. Drinking every weekend eventually turned into every day after six years, but I could still slow down. I was still in control. Five years later after buying my first house a 3/2 with a pool, my girlfriend bet me I could not stop drinking for thirty days, and being competitive I said O.K. Well I did it, but it was right back on when day thirty one came around. She told me you were the biggest Expletive when you were not drinking. At that point I knew I had a problem. I was 30 years old. I would go between drinking and maintenance drinking, maintenance drinking was drinking two beers a day to keep the edge off. Five years later and in my second house a 3/2 2 car garage on an acre and a third, I thought I made it, success. But, to the successful ideology of life. A house with a little white picket fence. Only my fence was a chain link fence, but nevertheless I thought it was success.... Then one night on the way home I was in an accident. I still remember what my first thought before impact was, my life is never going to be the same... I did not know where that thought came from or how far it would carry me.

I began checking my thought processes. How about the 2's times table. 2 n2 is 4 and 4 is 8 and so forth. But what I did not realize was my vocabulary was malfunctioning. I was in the hospital for two weeks before having to spend two more weeks at home due to a lacerated liver and a severe concussion. I began thinking I always said I was a Christian but I did not really know what that meant. I prayed over my meals, when I remembered which was not often. I started asking questions, why am I alive? What is my purpose? I began to ask God these questions and said to Him as soon as this headache is gone I'm going to read the Bible. One day my headache left for an hour and a found my Bible. It was about 17 years old and almost looked

new. I opened it and it fell opened to the book of Isaiah. So that's where I began to read. This went on for some time between headaches until about the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter when I started wondering, how long is this book. It is 66 chapters long. I asked God, why this book, it is the longest book in the Bible. I then turned up the volume on the television and I heard, about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the book of Isaiah is the most complete book found in the (Coom-ran) Qumran cave. I thought, God that is good enough for me I'll keep reading. Somewhere along the way I accepted Jesus as my LORD and Saviour.

Many other events happened in my life. Where God would show me some kind of sign that kept me pursuing Him. I would come across verses like Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." I thought that is a lot different ... than the worlds view where you can look, just don't touch. God started working on my thinking. I kept my head down when going to the store. Am I looking to long? Man why do I think like this, LORD forgive me and then I would confess first John 1:9. You see God was working on me in such a way to bring me to recovery. A recovery from sin and alcoholism. First He took the desire to drink away from me. I have been sober for over sixteen years now. Praise God, give Him the Glory. While in prison I went to AA to see what the 12 steps were. After going for almost two years I realized God had brought me through the steps without me even knowing it.

**Step 1.** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Yes, I knew from the time I quit for thirty days I was powerless over alcohol and now after that horrific event in my life certainly I was no longer in control of my life because, my life would never be the same again.

**Step 2.** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

I figured out I needed help this was my turning point which led me to turn to God and He has restored my sanity because I can find peace in Him no matter where I am. I am no longer under the dominion of sin unto death but I'm under the dominion of righteousness unto life eternal. Sanity comes from knowing God. Delusion is a world view of sanity.

**Step 3.** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

I understand Him to be God the Father, Jehovah; God the Son, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. I made the decision to turn my life over to Him knowing that my best, efforts, landed me in prison. And God probably could do better. What do you think? ... Of course He can, He is our Loving Father and He Cares for us.

**Step 4.** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

God was bringing things to my remembrance I started confessing first John 1:9. And He was faithful and just to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

I made a New Year's resolution in 1999 to start going to church and I have been going ever since. Through different Bible Studies men's groups and many self-help programs I have made such inventories. They actually help take away the burdens of sin and coupled with first John 1:9 cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

**Step 5.** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Through men's Bible Studies, Promise Keepers events and other Church functions I realized God had brought me through this too.

**Step 6.** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

I certainly was ready. Facing monthly court dates for almost four years and going through emotional mayhem, I knew something was wrong with me.

Please God Fix me, was my cry. Church and Bible studies helped me see those defeats of character and all I now wanted is to be like Christ. Christ-centered not self-centered. Do I have to tell you where my best efforts got me? I no longer wanted to be deceived, my new motto is the cross before me the world behind me no looking back. No looking back.

**Step 7.** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

God was showing me through the Bible that I have shortcomings and even though I knew it before, I was now ready to admit, face them and ask God to remove them.

**Step 8 and 9** say,

Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Not only did God bring to my remembrance such persons He also made me willing to make amends. I have gone through AA and Celebrate Recovery and a list of other programs I have also done these steps as well.

**Steps 10 through 12** are called the maintenance steps. This is where we all should be living, especially as Christians.

Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Matthew 5:23-24 say, Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

How many times I thought it was Ok to go and worship God on Sundays. Put Him first and I'll deal with so and so later, God is more important to me. I remember once getting into an argument with one of my Christians brothers and we did not talk for weeks. Then communion was next Sunday. I could not take communion without be reconciled to him. I went and got some guys to be mediators for me and to my surprise he had asked one of the same guys to do the same. We reconciled and took communion that Sunday. But God expects us to be reconciled to our brethren before we even worship Him. WOW it is still hard for me to believe. God here I am to worship You. And He says, "Go be reconciled with your fellow Christian then come back and worship Me." He must think our relationship are very important.

**Step 11.** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

There are many examples we could put here.

How about 2 Peter 3:18 which says, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We are to grow and we can when we mediate on His Word like Psalm 1 says. I remembered some fifteen years ago I looked up the verses dealing with God's will and posted them on my website. I posted them again. I did not even change anything it just shows where I was at that time. If you want to know my web address come see me later.

**Step 12.** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

You can substitute Alcoholics here with those who are or have other habits (maybe sin habits?), hang-ups from your past or hurts (that you may have experienced physically, emotionally or spiritually). These 12 steps are God's steps to healing. Healing from sin and a world that is upside down. God loves you and wants you to live an abundant life without hurts, habits or hang-ups that will burden you. We are also to bring the message of the Savior to others. Jesus said "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 KJV). We need to practice these principles in all our affairs.

God's peace awaits you are you willing to take a Journey to Renew your mind and find the rest and peace only our Creator can give.

Certainly I have a long resume of carrying the message to others. Starting with youth camps: Five of them while out on bond and appellant bond. Some a couple of days, two of them for over seven days.

Inviting others to church since 1999 and reaching out from 2008 to the present in some sort of recovery field, weather AA, Celebrate Recovery, Bridge Builders, or Church. That's right church. Church is the biggest recovery mission field. We are all recovering from sin. Romans chapter 1 lists over thirty sins. And both Colossians and Ephesians tell us to put off our old nature and put on our new nature. As Christians we should be practicing steps ten through twelve all the time.

Jesus Christ has forgiven us and once we have forgiven others we can live in peace. Thank You, Jesus for delivering me from an eternal death and giving me what I do not deserve eternal life. No more burdens, no more resentments, no more chains holding me. I'm free! Praise the Lord I'm free. I'm free from the burdens of sin. We can overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony. There is Power in the Blood. Wonder working power, in the blood of the Lamb.

Would you be free from the burden of sin?

Would you be free from your passion and pride?

Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow?

Would you do service for Jesus your King?

Be an overcomer. Tell someone your testimony this week. How Jesus has saved you. You will overcome the devil and Glorify God.