

My Miracle: A Recovery Story

Throughout my childhood, in Missouri, I was given the gift of having a God to believe in! The first "tangible" gift I ever received was given to me on the day that I was born. It was a King James, New Testament Bible. In my cache of things that survived Addiction is that Bible. Also, surviving it is a bracelet made of baby-blue and white beads, from the Presbyterian Church, that we attended. There is a blue bead for each year that I never missed a day of Sunday School, and each is separated by a white bead. It has 9 blue beads. Somehow these two things survived when I lost everything else; I mean everything, multiple times. When I was 9 we moved to California. My parents continued to attend Church every Sunday. Given a choice, I didn't go very often.

At 10, I started spending time away from our house with friends older than I was. At eleven I experimented with alcohol for the first time, coming home late so no one would smell the alcohol. At 12-years-old, I smoked marijuana with the new next door neighbor. I began drifting away from what I had been taught and from the people who taught me; My parents! By then I didn't go to Church at all. Through my early teenage years I no longer thought about God anymore. When I was a sophomore John Kennedy was assassinated (11-22-1963) and the whole of America had to question everything they had ever believed in. God only re-entered my thinking toward the end of High School. In 1963 the Civil Rights Act was passed and I came to know Rev. Martin Luther King. Before I graduated from High School, Bobby Kennedy and his close relationship to Reverend King had sparked a new hope, in spite of the Vietnam fiasco. On 11-17-1967, in Los Angeles, California, I took the oath to enter the United States Navy. I had resorted to enlisting in the Navy to avoid being drafted, and to try to get away from my ever increasing use of drugs. I had begun to think about the whole higher power concept again, trying to make sense of the confusion associated with the whole Vietnam thing.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4th, 1968. I was in Navy school in San Diego. I was devastated. Shortly before completing my second Navy school, on June 5th, 1968 Sen. Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. At that moment, I lost faith in the entire human race! I definitely began to question my being a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. The worst was still ahead, for me. I was growing up faster than I should have had to. I was 19 years old and very, very confused. In 1969 there were over 500,000 troops in Vietnam and another half a million supporting forces. The War was splitting the U.S. in half, with the opinion turning against our involvement. I had become political, and while a member of the Armed Forces began to take a support position with the Draft Resistance. This was very risky because I had a Top Secret security clearance and worked for the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet. I just couldn't help but think that if there was a God, what was taking place in that War, couldn't be happening. I was very conflicted and everything that was happening justified more and more drug use. Drug use was actually an accepted behavior in the civilian sector, of equal rights, anti-war, question everything, culture.

My remaining time in the Navy would completely put me in a tailspin, philosophically! I came to see the atrocities of Vietnam as they came to America on the TV and to us in reality. I began to hate myself and what I was a part of. I started living inside of my head and it was a very precarious place. By the time I was discharged, I was a completely anti-social, self-proclaimed atheist, drug addict! I was completely Godless, living in a Godless world full of Godless people. At least, that's what my life experiences had led me to believe.

From the time I was 21 until I was 45 I lived life recklessly, with addictions to different drugs, multiple failed marriages, and eventually many trips to jail, all-the-while thinking I was justified

in my way of life and that the whole world was basically a bunch of greedy people with no principles or purpose further than that of getting their piece of it. So, what's the point! Of course, I spent that 25 years in a drunken drug stupor! By my last incarceration, I literally no longer wanted to live. Then something happened... something happened that I couldn't have predicted... something happened that I had never even considered!

The Miracle Happened... This is the first written account... Only one person has known of it...

On January 28th, 1995, in court, I took a plea bargain for a year in jail and a year in Rehab, in lieu of a prison sentence of three years. I did this even though for the last week I had been seriously questioning if I could do even one more day locked up. Coincidentally, my father was in the hospital in questionable condition, and it was his birthday the next day. I could no longer see why I should be alive, and was in a dark depression. When they locked us down at 6:00 PM, I just sat on my bunk, deep inside of my head, feeling sorry for myself... and disgusted with myself... until they shut the lights off, at 10:00 PM. As the light disappeared, I began to cry, and the tears came to sobs... I broke and went to crying in agony, with tears running down my cheeks, dripping on to my bare legs, and I just couldn't stop. I was muffling myself from completely going out of control where others might hear me, but I was nearly convulsing as my thoughts left me and I moved into a state of total emotional pain. I was no longer thinking, I was just gone... gone into a state of being somewhere in between being conscious and unconscious with no ability to control mind! Suddenly with a gasp, control of my lungs came to me. Tears were streaming down my face, and words just came to my lips with no conscious effort or thought. I was saying the "Lord's Prayer". It must have been decades since I'd even thought of it. And, I wasn't thinking now, it was just coming from somewhere inside. As the prayer came to an end, I began to beg for God to help me. As I cried and prayed the corner of the room about 20 feet from me began to glow with a white light as I made promises that I swore to keep if I could just get help. I had no connection with the area around me, it was just like the World was me and that corner and everything else was just black with darkness. As the intensity of the light increased dramatically, and I begged and cried for God to help me; a figure began to become visible in the middle of the light. Though hazy, by the clothing and beard, I realized that it was God as I had envisioned him all of my life. He began to speak in a deep, soft, calming voice, and I began to listen though I was still crying uncontrollably. He answered my prayer granting me the forgiveness that I had been asking for. His voice penetrated me down to my soul! Then he told me that if I believed in him, signs would come to guide me to change what had been going on in my life for so long. It wasn't a conversation with him, though. I had prayed, now he was answering. As he assured me that my life would be better, the image started fading, and I stopped crying. Soon I was sitting on my bunk, exhausted, breathing deeply, with full consciousness returning, and I looked to my right where the wall clock was, and it was 12:05 AM, Jan. 29th, my Dad's birthday. My head was lite, and I was fatigued, and then I more or less passed out. Words cannot do justice to my experience that night. It was life altering and completely overwhelming, and it happened inside of a Jail! When the lights came on at 4:30 AM, I had just waken. I felt so different that I couldn't then, nor can I now, truly identify accurately the feeling. It was... it was, "Changed". Something about me had fundamentally changed. I've never been the same since! I was hungry though, and got dressed and ready for the locks to unlock and line up for breakfast. There was no one I could tell what had happened and I was not sure what exactly had happened, anyway, at that time. I didn't really care though, because I felt better than I could remember ever feeling, and I was in Jail. Early that morning, after returning from breakfast, a cop came and got me and took me to the Administrative

building and into the Chaplain's office. There, the Chaplain told me that he had received word from my mother that my father had taken a turn for the better and would be able to go home soon. I immediately felt a correlation between this and my experience from the previous night. I felt a compassion from that Chaplain that I hadn't felt for a very long time. A million thoughts spun through my head for the rest of the morning. I asked for and was granted permission to go to the library after lunch. There was no normal reason for the library request, it was just the most private place I could think of in that Jail. I was trying to sort out my thoughts, at one point wondering if I was really still asleep, and everything was just part of a dream. My life completely changed, from that point on!

I was relieved of the craving to use drugs. Once, someone handed me a beer, and I took a couple of swallows. It was March 24th, 1995. I have not used since. I did not have to do a whole year in Jail. On April 8th, 1995, I entered the CDT Program at the VA Hospital, Fresno, California. I was there for 6 months and then returned to society, on 3 years of Felony Probation. I completed Probation without incident, and became friends with my Probation Officer. Years later I found myself sitting across the desk from him, to get his approval of the Treatment program I had become Director of! In my prayers shortly after my radical spiritual experience, I told God that I would really appreciate getting to live for 10 years, clean and sober. It's been a little over 13 years since the change took place! It is not now, and has not been, all peaches and cream, though. I'm not doing an autobiography, so it should suffice to say; I have Hyper-tension, I have COPD (emphysema), and am diabetic. Last but not least I suffer from the addiction of overeating. While off on disability with the onset of the diabetes, the company I was working for, let me go because of contract compliance needs. After that, my insurance was canceled. This poor economy has just about eliminated Grants my profession depends on. I have 2 weeks left on disability and I don't have a job. Even though it's often been at the last moment more than once, God always sees to it that something breaks for me. And, He will again!