

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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GOD PUT THE

PIECES
OF
MY LIFE

BACK TOGETHER

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Addiction and a reckless lifestyle were destroying Duane's life, but God kept reaching out to him.

By Duane Wilson



When asked to give my testimony, I am forced to rip away the lid I keep on my memories. This isn't something I like to do, but when God can get the glory, it is worth sharing the story of what He has done for me. As

I look back, I see the master plan He had for my life. Even when I wasn't looking for God, He was arranging events so I could find Him when I desperately needed Him.

MY EARLY YEARS

My early years were spent in a small town in Mississippi. My family was poor, and life was hard. I lived with my mother, two sisters, brother, aunt, and grandmother in a three-room house. I never heard the Bible read in our home, but I attended church every Sunday. Unfortunately, my Sunday school teachers did not know about the power of God. When I was almost thirteen, I told my mother that I transferred to another church. She didn't know I was hanging out with my friends instead of going to church.

I soon started getting into trouble. I was an adventure-seeker and began hanging around older kids. I started lying, stealing, and by age thirteen, drinking alcohol. Then I began skipping school. My mother warned me, tried to reason with me, and even punished me, but nothing stopped my pursuit of trouble. At age fourteen, when it became evident that I was out of control, my mother sent me to Portland, Oregon, to live with my father.

My life in Portland was no different, but I also started using drugs. After three months, I ended up in the hospital, overdosed on drugs and close to death. My father tried to get me to turn around and face life. He talked to me about where I was headed and what I was doing to myself, but I wouldn't listen. Soon I was in trouble for shoplifting. I ended up in a foster home and from there in Juvenile Detention. As soon as I graduated from high school, I went home to Mississippi.

NO FUTURE AND NO DIRECTION

I started college and quickly dropped out. Then I joined the Army, but nothing changed; I still partied and used drugs. When I left the Army after three years, I had nothing more than when I had started—no future, no direction. With no other place to go, I returned to Portland to live with my dad. I hoped he and I could start getting to know each other. Since the pattern of my life was already set, a new environment did not change the way I behaved. As soon as I settled in, I began partying, doing drugs, stealing, and living a very sinful life. I hurt all of my closest loved ones and ruined every relationship that I had. At times, I would try to gain control of my life and change my habits, but I failed each time.

During those years, God was faithful to warn me, even though I did not know much about Him. God often talked to me. I heard a definite Voice telling me, “Go to church.” Again and again I would hear those words while watching television, sitting in the house, and even while at work. I ignored it all.

CONVICTION GRIPPED MY HEART

Then heavy conviction came upon me, and I couldn’t eat or sleep. For about three weeks, I was absolutely miserable, both physically and spiritually. I thought I was going to lose my mind. Hoping to shake the feeling, I started going to church. A friend suggested that I visit his church and confess to a priest, so I did that too. I thought that maybe giving money to the church would help. I even tried to “help the poor” by making about fifty bologna sandwiches to take downtown and hand out to the homeless. Nothing helped. Then I began reading the Bible and praying.

One Sunday, I stopped by an acquaintance’s house and heard that an older gentleman was calling around, looking for someone to drive him to church that evening. I decided to give him a call, but when I did, a woman answered with the words, “Jesus loves you.” It turned out that I had dialed the wrong number, but God knew what I needed to hear. After re-dialing, I was able to make arrangements to take the man to church.

The minister asked, “Who are you serving?” I knew I was not serving God.

That night, I walked into the Apostolic Faith Church. I don’t remember the songs or what went on in the service. I don’t even remember the sermon, other than when the minister asked, “Who are you serving?” I knew I was not serving God. At the end of the service, I went forward to an altar of prayer, and there I cried out to God from the very depths of my soul, “God, do something for me!” Though I did not have any hope in my heart, God made a change in my life.

A CHANGE IN ME

When I finished praying, I didn’t feel different as far as my problems were concerned. They were too big for me to feel peace. I didn’t even know what the word “salvation” meant, but what I did know was that I could eat for the first time in a couple of weeks, and was even able to sleep. As the days passed, I knew I had changed. My drug addiction was gone, the stealing had stopped, and the sinful life was over. In fact, I began testifying to the people I used to work with.

The night I got saved, one of the ministers told me that if I had any problems, I could call the church office for prayer. I called the office the very next day, and over time, I learned to pray for myself. More than anything else, salvation gave me someone to go to when I needed help: God.

Shortly after getting saved, I realized that I needed to clear up some things in my past. I began visiting stores to pay for things I had stolen, and I wrote letters to companies I had defrauded. The amount of money I owed was enormous, but over a number of years, God helped me make every restitution that He laid on my heart until my conscience was clear.

I didn’t get into my troubles overnight, and I didn’t get out overnight, but God was with me every step. Before I was saved, I had made some enemies that would put my life in danger. One day, in a store, I saw a man who had threatened me before. I was scared, but I knew I had to apologize for what I had done to him. I walked over and told him I was sorry. I didn’t know what he would do. He looked at me and said, “I heard that you got saved, and I knew that if you were really saved, you would apologize. My brothers wanted to hurt you, but God told them to leave you alone.”

KEPT BY GOD’S POWER

It has been many years since that night on October 2, 1983, when I met God—many years of knowing that He loves me unconditionally, and many years of victory over sin! He took me, a sinful, rebellious young man with nothing good left in my life, and made me a child of His. He put my life back together. Now I can look back with thanksgiving at all the blessings, the good times, and the hard times God has brought me through. I am looking forward to a future with Him in Heaven some day. I can say that God is a good God! ■

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God’s help.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God’s help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.

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)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)