

Terrible Sinner Saved By Grace

I was raised Catholic and I used that term loosely because I didn't understand what a Catholic was. We didn't really go to church consistently or even read the bible at all. However, as far as I can remember I understood the concept of a God and Jesus and I was a "believer." When I was a small child I believed God was watching over us and seeing everything we did. Even knowing this I still did things that would not please God. But that being said I was always taught that you just ask for forgiveness and everything will be made right in God's eyes. Which is not that far off from the truth but I thought it was more like a get out of jail free card. I believe my family thought the same way. I would learn later in life that this is not how God's mercy works. See I used it as an ace up my sleeve. I could go about my life and actively live in sin and when I was done or felt guilty, I would ask God to forgive me and it would all be fixed. This carried on until my adult years. I found myself in a dark world of drug use and illegal activities. The whole time I did have my conscious tugging at me. I definitely knew right from wrong. I just liked doing wrong, it seemed easier. I didn't realize at the time but I had many addictions. Which seemed normal because everyone I knew was doing the same things. Work hard and play harder, Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll was the way everyone I knew lived their life. This carried on until my early 20's when I knew I was out of control and had to do something about it. So I joined the military to get away and start anew. Although I signed up, something inside me knew that one day I would have to deal with some of the illegal activities that I did when I was living an ungodly life. Little did I know it wouldn't be that far down the road.

While I was in Bootcamp my past had caught up with me. I was in a lot of legal trouble and looking at serious jail time. ***This is when I saw the mercy of God for the first time in my life.*** I knew I believed in him and his power to do anything according to his will. I knew he was rich in mercy. So I started praying. I prayed fervently. I prayed my butt off with sincerity. I prayed for him to help me. I confessed my sins to him. I prayed with a humble and contrite heart. After 3-4 weeks a miracle happened. The authorities dropped the charges against me and I was allowed to stay in the military. Glory to God! I was so Happy. You would think that would be enough for one person to stay on the straight and narrow... but not for me. Today I now realize that I'm flawed and if I don't stay close to my savior Jesus Christ the prince of this world Satan will try and suck you right back into a life of sin. I did well in the military. I wasn't living the life that God had planned for me. I still got drunk, smoked, cursed and objectified women. I was a very self centered individual. I didn't appreciate the grace and mercy that I was Given. After the military I went back home to where I used to live and it didn't take long to start carousing with ungodly people. I would spend a lot of time at nightclubs and I started back doing drugs and not too long I was back into doing some of the things that got me into trouble before I went into the military. I had to leave the area that I lived in because I would have probably ended up dead or in jail. I moved far away and tried to get some "normal" type of life going. Although I knew I needed to get away from the lifestyle I was living, I still found myself drifting toward the same things. I remember crying out to God that I don't want to live my life this way and I don't want to go to Hell! I laid sobbing on my bedroom floor. ***That's when I experienced another miracle in my life!*** When I woke the next morning, I felt like the weight of the world had been lifted off me. I was filled with energy that I could not explain. I felt changed. I was so joyful and I felt the power of God had touched me! Praise Jesus! I had all this energy and was on fire for Jesus! I had to tell

everybody! So I did. I told my parents, brothers and friends and even the ungodly people I hung around. I told them that they needed to experience what I had. I was so enthusiastic and I remember them all looking at me like I lost my mind. Which I thought was sad because I could tell them about my exploits on a Friday night and they would listen with both ears. As soon as you talk about Jesus to the ungodly and they start to disengage or get down right upset. I had a fire in me and I didn't really know what to do with it. I did have a vision while I was sleeping one night on what God wanted me to do. Although I tried to look into doing what he asked, I didn't pursue it like I should have. I felt like I let God down. Days went on and I moved closer to my family. Slowly I started to let that flame grow dimmer. I got a job in construction and I did attend church. I didn't surround myself with godly people that could help me grow in my faith. I hung around people that lived ungodly and not according to how God intended us to live. I got married to my first wife. It didn't last long. I didn't take the sanctity of marriage seriously. We were both unfaithful selfish people and we got divorced. I eventually stopped going to church. While getting separated and then divorced from my first wife I met my now second wife. Although we didn't get married right away we started our life together. We had two beautiful children and eventually we got married. Unfortunately, for her I was still hiding my addictions and our marriage and she paid the price for my sins. She found out that I was unfaithful to her and after years of lies, deception and abuses I broke her heart. ***That's when yet another miracle took place!*** She gave me grace. With her helping me, we went to marriage counseling. We attended counseling for many years and even though she gave me grace I still had hatred in my heart toward her due to my selfish nature. Instead of looking deep inside myself and loving her the way God intended. I went the other way. Blaming her and not trusting her. Remember the Devil is a Liar. My wife fought the Devil and prayed fervently for God to save our marriage and without her I wouldn't be on the path I'm on today. I have faced my addictions head on with God's help. I have immersed myself in God's word. Which is crucial in finding out how God wants you to live your lives. I walk circumspectly not giving the Devil a place in my life. Trust me he shows up constantly. But the bible says resist the devil and he will flee from you. I've renewed my faith and feed it daily. I love my wife like it says to do in the Bible and I pray several times a day for God to guide me, give me wisdom so I can be the best Christian, husband, father and person I can be. None of this would have taken place if it wasn't for a loving and merciful God. I'm finally understanding what loving someone is all about. The love and mercy God extended to me, I want to extend to my wife, family and others. God has me on a different path now. It's not always easy. However, calls us to be his witnesses. To use our story to lead others to him. That's what I'm doing now. It is my prayer that this will inspire someone to come closer to God

So when you feel God is not there, he is! He wants you to come in your weakness because he is strong. If you haven't yet cried out to the Lord to Forgive you and invite him into your life, you should today, you won't regret it! If God can save a terrible sinner like me I'm sure he can save you too.

Your Brother in Christ,
Terry S