



I grew up in a small community in South Jersey; it was the quintessential small town and I had a good upbringing. I played sports in high school and excelled in academics; the list of accomplishments included National Honor Society, School President, Boy's State Delegate, and Rutgers Scholar. One well known Pastor says that desire always trumps intellect and for being so smart I sure was dumb to begin using drugs and alcohol.

I started drinking alcohol before high school dances and I could count on both hands the number of cigarettes I smoked at that time. I look back now through the lens of the Bible and the world (spoken of in scripture as the enemy of God)

wanted me to join in their program. My summer reading list for college included an introduction to Buddhist concepts, they lined up young women across the hall in our co-ed dorms, and I had my first encounter with marijuana at a fraternity party. My studies soon took a back seat to the party life and I began smoking marijuana on a daily basis. I finished up at college without a degree and began to compromise more; I never imagined I would use "hard drugs" but I was further down the wrong road than I could understand.

I never would have gone from a straight A student to a cocaine user, but I made a series of poor choices from drinking, to cigarettes, to marijuana, and finally cocaine. Also, I began using drugs to get "up" to work all day and all night and "down" to get some sleep. The road I was on took me to a very dark demonic place and fear, isolation, and death loomed near.

A friend of my fathers called my parents' home to speak to me and urged me to get some help; I was home in the middle of the day with no job and in my mid thirties. I still remember the first bible study I attended at Calvary Chapel Bellmawr because I never heard the word taught by the Spirit. I was encouraged to "get help" at a Christ Centered Recovery in Winterport, Maine through Calvary Chapel Orrington called Seven Oaks in 2006.

I believe it was my second day at Seven Oaks and I was returning from work detail; I felt awful and wondered why I was in Maine. A Christian man, Bob Thomas, asked me if I wanted to accept Christ into my heart. I shot right back at Bob, "is He going to help me stop using," and Bob said He would. I prayed with Bob and asked Christ into my heart; it's been a rough road from then till now, but Christ has been with me every step of the way!

The Lord directed our steps to help facilitate an Arise meeting in Cherryfield, Maine. My wife and I, through the leading of the Spirit, began the meeting about two years ago at Church of the Open Bible. Our church family compassionately helps minister to people struggling with drugs and alcohol; we love them, point them to Jesus, and trust God to change their hearts.