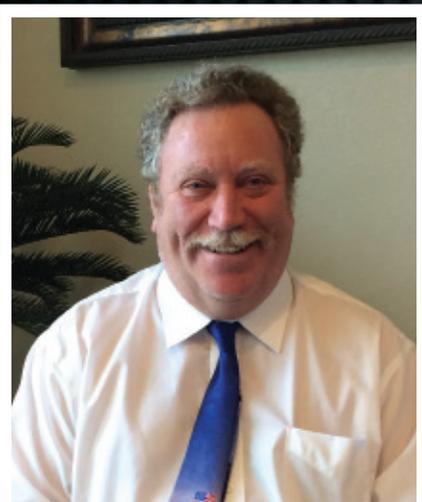


# God set me free from loneliness and addiction.



My name is Doug Wilkinson, and this is My Story.

I was born and raised in the Lehigh Valley, and for the first 18 years attended one of the larger liberal Protestant churches in Allentown. I was baptized as a baby, confirmed as a young adult, and attended Sunday School and church most Sundays. In my late teens the “god-is-dead” theology was beginning to be propagated. I knew there was a God but did not comprehend the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. After all, how can you have a Son without a Mother? So I didn’t give it much thought.

After graduating from college, it was time to move to a new location and start a new life—without church and without God. Being young and reckless, I lived to work, foolishly working long hours. Where I worked, you were either a doper or a drunk. “Uppers” were the “candy” that allowed us to work the long hours. After one extremely long week God sent an angel—actually a co-worker named Brett—who warned me, “If you keep doing this stuff, you’re gonna pop a vessel.” It was the first time that I remember God saving me from myself. I gave up the drugs—but not the drinking.

Three years later I moved back to the Lehigh Valley to marry my high school sweet heart. But that marriage only lasted a year before we separated. Feeling alone, unloved and a failure, I began a period of immoral living. To combat the loneliness, I started to drink and became a functional drunk. Several years later I remarried, this time it lasted a little longer—about eight years.

During this time, I worked for a company repairing computers and this required driving for many hours a day. To pass the boredom and the hours, I listened to the radio. I do not care what style of music you like, all radio stations are the same—they play the top 10 or top 40, excluding the 10,000 other titles. It was so boring having to listen to the same stuff every day. Then I discovered and started listening to Christian radio. I found it interesting and challenging, so I kept listening. This also was the start of my journey to salvation, because the things I heard taught there made me start to think about God again. (Note: salvation, saved and born again are Biblical terms referring to the forgiveness of sins by God and the rescue of a person from the power and penalty of that sin. This is God’s requirement for everlasting life.)

One preacher in particular got me thinking about the Trinity. He suggested holding up an invisible jar and filling it one-third of the way with invisible blue sand, then another one-third of invisible green sand, then finally one-third with invisible red sand—until it is full. After the invisible jar is full, put the lid on it and no matter which way you move the jar there are still three layers of sand. Another example he gave was the human hand. It has fingers and each finger has a specific purpose and function. Aside from the hand the fingers could not exist. The explanations were not perfect, but they were sufficient to help me grasp the teaching and reality of the Trinity.

The next challenge was learning that the “SON” in the New Testament was not biological but positional—the Son was the heir to the Father. Even now I have to remind myself that when I read “first born” in the Word of God, it is speaking of positional not biological. I learned that I could have a positional relationship as well, as explained in Romans chapter 8, verse 15. “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

One day while listening to the Christian radio, I was challenged to read the Bible and so I did. I started reading from Genesis and read all the way to Revelation and began to see the consistency and the holiness of God. The same God who clothed Adam and Eve after they sinned is the One who also accepted the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. This same God came to earth as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." (John chapter 1, verse 29) How could it be that the Creator of the universe died for me—a wicked drunken sinner who did not deserve to be saved? I knew that there was nothing I could do to remove my sins from the presence of a Holy God except cry out, "Jesus, save me!" I made that plea from my living room while watching a TV evangelist in April of 1989.

How could a drunk sinner like me be saved? Only because I cried out to God to help me! I knew I could not do it on my own. I could never make myself good enough to get to heaven. I also knew that Jesus Christ had died on the cross to pay for my sins, and He promises to save all those who are willing to turn from their sin and make Him the Lord of their life. The Bible tells us in Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

From that day forward, God began to change my life. He put a burden on my heart that I needed to stop drinking alcohol. So I resolved that I was going to count the number of days I was sober, and that I was never going to start counting from one again. Praise the Lord, I haven't to this day! God helped me to overcome my alcohol addiction. In short order, my addictions to tobacco and television were also overcome. I was no longer consumed by the horrible feeling of loneliness, but knew the Lord was with me.

How do I know that I am saved? First of all, I have the promise of Jesus Christ, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5) That gives me assurance. But I also have experienced the peace of God in my life that the Bible talks about in Philippians chapter 4, verse 7. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That peace of God has been a real comfort to me when I've gone through major crises in my life, and even in the daily run-of-the-mill problems. Finally, the transforming changes that God has brought about in my life show me that I am a new creature. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." (Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17)