



COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

Free to Delight in Him!

As a child I didn't make friends easily, and when I did I never really felt like I fit in. Part of the problem was I would feel guilty doing some of the things that they did. I was raised a Christian and tried to do all of the things that a "good" Christian boy should do. From the earliest time I can remember, I had a deep love for God. I was fortunate to have Christian parents and grow up in a loving home. I went to church and loved reading the Bible, but I grew to envy my friends because they seemed to have fun doing things that I thought my parents wouldn't approve of. This pattern continued throughout my junior and senior high school years. Envy was growing stronger in me and I didn't realize how it would affect me later in my life. I went on to attend a Christian college, pretty isolated from what I considered the evil world. There was no partying in college, no drinking and no drugs. But I didn't stop thinking about all the fun I imagined I was missing.

After college I married a wonderful Christian woman named Mary Beth. We went to church each Sunday and I was active in a Christian men's group. Shortly after we were married, I began to do the things that I always wished I could do. I started out by drinking and going out for poker nights with the guys. There were even times I would drive home drunk in the middle of the night, sneak in and not wake up my wife so I could keep this part of me a secret from her.

During the next few years our daughters were born. Outwardly, I was a good Christian father to them and a good husband to my wife. But inwardly, I was in hell. I lived a double life. I started to steal narcotics from medicine cabinets. I began abusing prescription pain killers. Before I knew it, I was hooked. My habit progressed and this good Christian man on the outside became an IV drug addict. I still managed to go to

work every day. I still managed to get home every day. I even managed to hide my secret pretty well, but each day I was getting sicker and sicker.

My addiction progressed to the point that I went through withdrawal every night and had no appetite. I lost 25 pounds in a short period of time. I needed help. In May of 1987 I shared my secret with Mary Beth. The next day I went to work and told my boss. I asked for help and that very day I was admitted to a detoxification unit at a hospital, and three days later to a drug treatment center for 30 days. Confident that I had it licked, I felt broken when I relapsed the day after I got out of treatment. I really needed God's help. That night I shared my relapse with some men in my church. They prayed with me and God delivered me. He took away my desire for drugs. From that moment on, I could remember no euphoria, only the pain I suffered during my addiction.

I've been clean and sober now for 21 years. Through it all, God revealed Himself to me as powerful and faithful. Recently I discovered David's words in Psalm 37:1-2: "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away." For too long, I lived a life envying those who do wrong. I didn't realize that God alone could bring me joy. David goes on to say in Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." The fun that I thought I was always missing out on all through my life was really no fun at all. Now I know that the only way to find contentment and joy is by delighting in the Lord.

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