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MY TESTIMONY • THE CLIFFSNOTES EDITION:

I've worked in the creative and technology space for 19 years, and after writing 17 books and helping 31 people with their books, I'm often asked, "Where did you go to college?" I always look forward to that question because I get to say, "I thought about going to Washington State, but I ended up going to Washington County."

Backstory: With only 10 days remaining in my Senior year at Westside Christian High School, I was expelled for supplying alcohol at a weekend party. Shortly after my expulsion, I unknowingly set out on a 10-year journey through my own shadow of death.

At 19, after a year of making poor decisions, being sexually assaulted, and seeing my parents divorce, I discovered hopelessness while sitting in a Washington County jail cell awaiting sentencing for an Aggravated Theft 1 charge (Felony).

The following year, while my high school classmates embarked on bright futures at OSU, Biola, and George Fox, I majored in the delivery of a controlled substance on the streets of East Portland. After 9 years of trying to navigate life without a diploma while dragging 2 felonies along with me to every interview, I found myself living in a cheap basement with my pregnant wife and throwing newspapers for The Oregonian 8 nights a week.

At 26, after giving up on a fruitful future, I added adultery and alcohol abuse to my resume. Then, one night in September of 2003, everything came to a head when I arrived at work, and the "other woman" was there waiting for me. Because she knew of my religious beliefs, she told me if I didn't leave my wife and baby for her, she would have an abortion. That's how I found out she was pregnant.


Growing up as a P.K. (Pastor's Kid), many times in church and youth camps, I heard the following line read from the Book of James:

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

The moment the other woman said what she said to me, Satan pulled back the curtain and shamefully brought that verse to the surface of my mind so I'd be face-to-face with death. I knew that no matter my decision, at least 1 type of death would occur because of my previous actions. While letting this mental cancer consume me, I began to drink even more. That same month, while driving on a back road from Wilsonville to Newberg in the middle of the night, I crashed my motorcycle and woke up in a LifeFlight helicopter.

Even though that event was 20 years ago, I can easily return to that dark and cloudy time in my mind. I can still remember the loneliness in the empty parking lot night after night before the newspaper truck arrived. I can remember the images Satan placed in my mind, much like a dealer deals cards. I can remember how each photo displayed a look of disgust on both girls' faces. I can remember the blaring and mind-numbing music of Linkin Park with the repeated lyrics, "The very worst part of you is me!" I can remember holding a bottle in my left hand, a cigarette in my right hand, and feeling the alcohol turn into tears while I hesitantly and hypocritically cried out to God for help. I hated myself. I was at the end of myself. I saw no future for myself. All I saw was an endless pattern of pain for everyone in my wake.

Shortly after the motorcycle accident, I chose my wife and baby over the "other woman," and relocated to Medford.



That's when God answered my drunk and desperate prayer. As He started the process of softening my heart and mind, I felt the dark cloud lift for the first time in a decade. I could finally see a bit of light on the path in my shadow of death. Even though Satan continued to deceive and deal his cards, he couldn't prevent the next chapter from happening since God wrote it before I was born.

Looking at my resume, you'll notice my business journey began in 2004 when I first learned Adobe InDesign while on the job at Guitar Center. From that point on and for the next 10 years, I continually taught myself every technology tool I use today.

During those early days in 2004, I remember asking God for understanding and wisdom. I knew I would need those two gifts in order to never return to my vomit. Because He granted them, I guarded them. I'm only where I am today because of His love and His promise to help me follow His guidance.

A strong desire to help, teach, and mentor others was one of the biggest byproducts that blossomed when He revealed my purpose. Feeling energized by compulsion instead of feeling defeated by obligation is a gift within itself.

From all of this, I've learned that when I seek first His guidance as I walk through my shadow of death, there's no need to fear Satan's cards because my Father is with me, and I know the work He started will continue each day because of the power that works within me.