



Transformed -The New Life

by Ray Pierce

I'd like to share with you what God has done for me. I've been given a new life, other than salvation. I've been set free from all addictions and so much more.

For nothing! Absolutely nothing, is impossible with God.

Let me give you a microwave version of my old life to the new life.

I battled against drugs and alcohol addiction from the age of 13 to 38 years old. I spent 12 years in and out of county jails, prisons, and rehabs as a result of my poor lifestyle choices. I got into trouble and engaged in criminal activities to support my addictions.

In my teens, I really didn't know who I was, so I found my identity in a group of kids we called "the burnouts". Weed, beer, pills were my drugs of choice then. Years later it led to crack cocaine and heroin and other mind altering substances. I never thought I would grow up to be a junkie. As a

wise Pastor once said, "Sin will truly take you further than you want to go and keep you longer than you want to stay". Every time I found myself in trouble, I would try to quit on my own or go to short-term rehab for 2 weeks, 30 days, in-patient, outpatient, or turn to God.

My mom raised me going to church, Sunday school and choir until I was about 11 or so and then I decided I wouldn't go with her anymore. To this day, my mom still prays for me. Thank God for praying mothers!! I knew about God and that he could help me, the seed was planted, but I refused to let it be watered. I prayed, read a little Bible, accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior again and again, doing just the bare minimum, but I wasn't fully committed or completely surrendered to following Jesus. I would attend AA and NA until life was again better and I was again out of trouble.

Back on my feet, I would go back to my old ways. Gradually slipping back into full blown addiction and relapse to alcohol, drugs, and criminal activity. It was a vicious cycle that I was trapped in, or better put, lost in. I did this for years. Over and over. It was complete madness. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over yet expecting different results. If that's the case, I was living a completely insane life.

June 11, 2011. I woke up once again, by the grace of God, in a county jail cell after a drinking and drug binge, crime spree, and 6th drunk driving charge as well being served with divorce papers. I had many rock bottoms, many times being sick and tired of being sick and tired. I have lost people to heroin overdose and almost died several times myself that I know of. I'm sure God has saved me many more times than I'm aware. I was dreaming in my jail cell and was awakened by a loud voice calling my name, RAYMOND!! I believe it was the voice of God calling me. Well, actually, hollered at me just like Jesus cried out to Lazarus to raise him from the dead.

In the past, I tried everything to stay sober. This time, I completely surrendered to God and I was going to give it my all to learn about the God who was calling my name.

I was sentenced to 2 ½ to 5 years in prison for felony drunk driving. I ended up serving 3 ½ to 5 years with a parole to a 6 month residential substance abuse treatment center.

I relate this time in prison as my Jonah in the belly of the whale experience. I treated my time in prison like a Bible college. You can choose to get better or bitter, or you as a third option you can choose to be a better criminal. I chose to get better. I chose Jesus. Yet, at the same time, I knew it was Jesus who chose me.

I've dipped my toe in God's Word before, but something about this time was completely different. For the first time, what I was reading made sense to me. I understood it. It was instruction, it was life itself! I asked myself, "where has this book been my whole life"? I now know that I was spiritually blind, but now the blindfold was removed. Praise God! I was once blind, but now truly, I see. I read the Bible from cover to cover and did three extensive Bible courses over a three year period from my prison cell. I watched Christian programs from TBN, attended church in prison. I made friends with other christian men in prison. I did what the Bible told me to do.

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but transform yourself by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will."

I was invited to a 3 day revival while I was in prison. It was called Keryx #6 in St. Louis, Michigan. Dozens of pastors from all denominations of the christian faith come to visit for three days straight. They broke bread with us, worshipped with us, we heard the good news and testimonies, and we were loved just as we are by God's people. The Keryx revival was a great example of living a Christian lifestyle. These people were willing to come to the prison to witness and walk alongside the worst of the worst! It made me want even more of Jesus and to learn how to live this Christian lifestyle.

After 3 ½ years of prison I was given a parole only under the condition that I go to a residential substance abuse treatment program. I initially was not happy about this. I had already served 3 ½ years in prison doing everything that I could do to bettering myself and my life. Yet, this was God's way of putting icing on the cake. I was so ready to be a free man physically, I didn't think I needed anymore "treatment", but God knows best, and remember, I have a praying mother.

The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord. I was walking in HIS righteousness and declared righteous by and through the accepting of Jesus. I gained the tools and coping skills that God knew I needed at this rehab. I had to embrace the challenge of change and Jesus was right there beside me.

I had to get down to the root cause of my addictions, which were selfishness and not being happy with the life that I created for myself and not being able to manage my feelings and emotions without using drugs or alcohol and not knowing who I was in Christ Jesus. God had a plan and it was good.

Today I know who I am in Christ. I have identity, acceptance, security, meaning, and purpose in and through Christ Jesus. It is the love of Jesus and following Jesus that has transformed my life. "Whoever is in Christ Jesus is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold all things have been made new." I stand on God's Word and I decree and declare God's word over my life and my family's life each day.

I had to the natural and God did the supernatural. I had to do the due's and I still do everyday. Today I co-lead a 12 step life recovery group on Monday nights at Faith Alive. I choose everyday to put on Jesus and take off and shed the old man. I have a set time with God everyday. An appointment that I protect so that I never miss it. I pray, I worship, I get into God's word, I read devotions. I get my daily bread. I now have a brand new life, a fresh start. I have a beautiful wife that God led me to on a Wednesday night church service of a new church that I was visiting. Pastor Chad shook my hand and told me to make myself at home. So I did. For 8 years I've

lived the lifestyle of following Jesus and he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. God has opened doors for me that only he could open with employment, housing, marriage, obtaining a foster care license, a drivers license. I have 4 adult sons and 2 wonderful daughters.

God is filling my house with treasure. Thank you Jesus for a new life, a transformed life. Life is a journey, and I know not 100% where I should be, but praise God that I'm not where I used to be- it's ok, because I'm on my way!

Jesus did it for me. He can do it for you, too.

In love, I challenge you to do the do's and then watch Jesus move.