

TRANSFORMED



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Even though I was raised in a decent middle-class family, I was hurt deeply as a child. Consequently, I grew up with a low self-image and a negative outlook on life.

When my best friend introduced me to drugs, I thought they would solve all my problems. I soon escaped the realities of life by plunging into the hippie culture: hash, LSD, cocaine, speed, pot, rock concerts, protests, and the peace/love movement. I flunked out of college and blew an opportunity to play bassoon in the U.S. Army Band. Depression drove me to an attempted suicide and a visit to a psychiatrist. This man was a Christian and told me that Jesus was the answer to all my problems, but I rejected his advice and turned, instead, to a secular psychiatrist, mood elevators, and later, flight to Hawaii.

In Hawaii, I was a lone-hippie, still bound and desperate. My supplier, a black man whom we called Satan, controlled my life.

Of greater torment than the drugs, though, were the

terrifying thoughts of suicide - voices urging me to jump off volcanic peaks, high buildings, or to drive off bridges. To silence the voices, I again turned to psychiatrists and to psychiatric drugs. One day my crazy roommate tied sheets together and hung himself out of the window. I was living in a nightmare, and wasn't getting better. When I found out that the doctors were going to commit me to the state mental hospital, I got desperate enough to see a Christian psychiatrist. As this man shared scriptures and ministered to me, I was lifted out of my depression. Shortly thereafter, he released me and I flew to California to join my brother.

My younger brother, Richard, had found Jesus and was eager to share his faith. I turned to him a couple of times, but each time, I was so filled with conviction, that I had to leave.

I got on a plane headed east, back to where all my mess had begun seven years ago. My mind flew back as well, recalling all that I had gone through. I thought, "Man, if something drastic doesn't change my life soon, I'll wind up right where I started. I began thinking about all of the people who had shared Jesus with me: the doctors, my brothers, and my grandmother, who was a real prayer warrior. Looking out the window at God's magnificent creation, I couldn't help but believe in Him. However, I thought, "I feel so empty inside. Nothing I've tried has satisfied me; the things of this

world have only led me to despair.

I looked again and commented to my neighbor how wonderful the clouds were laid out in the heavens. As I spoke, an amazing sense of peace swept over me, drawing me and gently filling me with comfort. I recalled a verse: "If you believe in your heart and confess Jesus with your tongue, you shall be saved." I began to doubt and another verse came to mind: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me." To find God, I knew I had to go through Jesus, and my conviction for sin was so real that I knew I needed His forgiveness. So I prayed, "Lord Jesus, please take away my sins and come into my heart this day." It was amazing. All of a sudden, I felt guiltless and forgiven for all my past.

Later, I prayed for Jesus to take away my dependency on drugs. That was nine years ago, and I haven't been dependent on drugs or depression medication since. Praise God! For "whom the Son sets free, shall be free indeed."

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