

MY GOD STORY - Chris

Growing up in Tulsa, OK, my family went to church on Easter and to an occasional Christmas service. At 13, I started drinking and doing drugs. I struggled through school and in my relationship with my divorced parents. I repeated the eighth grade due to lack of attendance and effort and struggled throughout high school, skipping classes and getting suspended. I spent evenings and weekends "partying" with my friends, usually driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana. Despite my reckless lifestyle, I steered clear of any trouble with the law.

I watched many of my friends move off to college and put their focus on their future. I stayed behind, living the same life I had been living, lacking in direction. My life was drifting away, but I had no idea how to put it on course.

My brother and sister had both accepted Christ and had witnessed to me. Jesus had really transformed my sister in an amazing way and her witness and constant Scripture-quoting convicted me tremendously.

Driving home from a party one night, I made the most important decision of my life. When I got home, I went into my room, fell on my knees and gave my heart to Jesus. I flushed my weed down the toilet and destroyed all remnants of my drug and alcohol life. Jesus saved me and transformed me! That cold night in January of 1987 was the last night I ever used drugs or got drunk. My friends abandoned me, but I did not care.

I moved to California with my father that summer. I went to college as a journalism major. Shortly thereafter, I became a sports writer and began witnessing to my colleagues, most of whom had very narrow views on Christianity. I eventually quit going to college because I had the job I wanted. But God had different plans.

I have learned in my walk that many times God uses strife in my life to draw me closer to Him and prepare me for His plan. The newspaper I worked for was bought out by a larger company and many employees, myself included, were let go.

Disillusioned by my own shortsighted plans, I dug in deep and sought out Jesus. God crossed my path with other believers hungry for more of Him. My desire to seek Him and serve Him led me to minister more to others, whether it was witnessing to people on the beach or walking the streets of Los Angeles at 1 a.m. passing out food to the homeless.

God led me to Texas and put a desire in my heart to minister to youth. Since then, I met my wife, Marie, whom I have been married to since 1995, and had two boys. We worked at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch as house parents for six years. The Boys Ranch is a Christ-centered organization where we raised teenage boys, teaching them about God and prayerfully trying to model Jesus for them.

The lessons I learned at Boys Ranch prepared me for my first youth director position in San Antonio in 2003. I thought I put my life in God's hands in 1987, but it turns out He has had his hand on my life the entire time. My desire is to serve Him always and go where He says go.