

How I got my job at Cox Communications

After my release from Clayton County Jail for violation of probation for a DUI offense I got back in June of 2012, I was again in need of a place to live. In that case, I had avoided going to trial for nearly a year but eventually could put it off no longer. I was only stalling for time so I could hire an attorney who could plead the offense down to something manageable and reasonable for me – like no jail time or fine! I found someone who I thought would be an affordable and effective attorney. However, I neglected to consider the fact that this guy was basically a one man show, although he shared his office with other attorneys. This was a lesson well learned. My lesson was to never hire an attorney who worked alone because they don't pose much of a threat to prosecutors because the last thing a lone attorney wants is to be confined to a courtroom, for any length of time, and jeopardizing the opportunity to field prospective calls from future clients. A shrewd prosecutor knows this and can very easily threaten to tie up the matter with court continuances that effectively take money out of the attorney's pocket. A lone attorney will avoid this kind of attrition at all cost for obvious reasons. Therefore, normally, the prosecutor has the upper hand but knows that a jury trial could place an undue burden on the already limited resources of the prosecutor's office. This means that "ideally" the prosecutor will understand that a plea bargain is in the best interest of all concerned, and will act accordingly.

Although my lone attorney did manage to resolve the issue with me being sentenced to serve jail time, I was given a rather stiff sentence with all things considered. I was given 12 months probation, a \$640 fine, completion of a DUI school, 240 hours community service, and 30 days of jail time to be served on weekends. Mind you, all of this needed to be completed within a 6 month period of time! You might say call this a setup for failure, at least that's what I called it. In reality, I was being sentenced right there on the spot to jail time but it was being delayed until such time that I failed to comply with my obligations. It was only a matter of time because all of this would need to somehow be accomplished with me taking the chance of continuing to drive my car with suspended licenses without being stopped by police! There would be no way I could do this using public transportation or with the aid of friends. I knew then that I would eventually serve jail time but I just didn't know how much.

By the time I hired the lone attorney, I had started working for a company called B-way Corporation here in Atlanta. It was yet another contract consulting job but the pay was great and after all it was here in Atlanta, which was most important. I was glad to be working here and not somewhere else because I wanted to try to put down some roots here in the city of my birth for a change. Working in other cities had taken its toll on my and I was desperate to finally call Atlanta home – for good! I even stopped availing myself for fulltime positions in other cities for this reason. I had begun to focus on my ministry again and to get back involved with skiing with my club. I started back attending church and other social meetings on a regular basis in hopes of rekindling my relationship with others. My last out of town assignment had been to Boca Raton, FL for about 1 month but it had disrupted a lot of the things I had been planning on doing here in Atlanta.

The assignment at B-way promised to become a fulltime job provided certain technical issues could be worked out. These issues were well known to me, and in my opinion, could not very easily be resolved without incurring a major cost by the company. Obviously, I was not going to “rush” to judgment so I decided to work for them until such time as they needed to make the decision themselves. After all, there would be work for me until that time, and it would give me more opportunity to find another solution that would work to my benefit, and theirs of course. Well, that day would eventually come and after working there for about 3 months I was again unemployed. This had not exactly come as a surprise to me, and financially I was prepared to maintain my lifestyle for maybe 3 months until I got another assignment. At least that’s how long I gave myself to get another job. Of course, that was considering that I would not experience any major issues with my car.

I had purchased a 1999 Cadillac Eldorado back when I was working up in Chicago, IL. Actually, it was Schaumburg, IL but close enough to Chicago via the Metra commuter rail for me to just say Chicago. Besides, whoever heard of Schaumburg? I know I hadn’t until I moved there. At roughly 30 miles northwest of Chicago, it’s about the same distance between Atlanta and Peachtree City, which is normally listed as a suburb of Atlanta. Most people “claim” the nearest big city when traveling abroad or to other states that aren’t as familiar with the local geography. I remember when I lived in Seattle a lot of folks I met would claim they were from Atlanta - not knowing I was really from Atlanta – when they were actually from somewhere 50 miles or more outside Atlanta. I never corrected them when they claimed Atlanta as home and was equally delighted they were from Georgia ... period. It still created a bond between us and that’s all that’s important to me anyway.

Well, now my car was acting up and threatening to burn through the meager finances I had specifically earmarked to sustain me for the time between jobs. The car was having major repair issues and was consuming my money faster than it could be replaced with other menial tasks I was able to do to generate some kind of income. However, the time came when I had to make the decision as to whether or not I could continue to through good money after bad. I wasn’t getting any return on the money I was spending on repairing the car and driving it only seemed to create additional problems. I decided to sell what had been my prized possession. At the time I was trying to sell it, it had cooling problems and a busted flywheel, which caused me to have to get the starter replaced on 2 separate occasions since I had been unemployed. It was turning into a nightmare trying to go to job interviews and hoping the car would hold up under the demands of needing to run the air conditioner in the middle of summer.

My first attempt to sell the car resulted in the car overheating before I could get it to the guy for him to look at. Even though the car was being advertised having at least the cooling problem, it’s not a good idea to let the perspective buyer see it like that before they can even get it home. The guy decided not to buy it and I had to try to get it home without doing further damage to it. Fortunately, I was able to sell it to someone, a young guy who liked how the car looked, because he thought he was getting too much of a bargain to turn it down. He was, because I was actually giving the car away. The Kelly Blue Book value was listed somewhere around \$5000 for such a car in “good condition”, and I was selling this one for \$1600. It had been \$1700 but the guy talked me down \$100. How could I argue with him? After all, I desperately needed that money! Also, \$1264 of that went to paying off a loan I had gotten from Titlemax, of which I received only the balance. It was a blessing that I could even arrange that to be

done because most folks simply don't want to complicate transactions with such legal matters. This guy had to pay the money first to Titlemax just to get the title back to the car, and then pay me the remainder. He also had to hope there were no additional liens on the car because liens travel with the merchandise and not with the person. That's some legal wrangling the City of Atlanta is dealing with now due to the Ferris wheel it purchased from Tampa, Fl recently. The wheel had a lien on it during the time it was owned by The City of Tampa and when it was sold to Atlanta, the lien became Atlanta's problem and they legally responsible to pay it. I mention all this because it speaks to how improbable it would have been for me to accomplish all this without the help of God.

After the car was sold, I was again at the mercy of public transportation, which was not very close to where I lived. It wasn't that bad but when you consider trying to go to an interview dressed in a suit and wearing dress shoes in the middle of summer it can be a daunting thing to do. It meant all my interviews had to be scheduled as early in the morning as possible, and as close to my home as possible. This only served to limit my already limited pool of the jobs I could pursue because all the jobs I pursued had to now be on the bus line. I had to avoid going after jobs out of town if I hoped to find fulltime employment here. Fortunately for me, I had posted my resume online for perspective staffing agencies and employers to see. I also had online alerts that informed me of job opportunities on a daily bases. In my profession it's not at all uncommon for me to discuss a job, interview for it, and then be hired over the phone without needing to go in for a face to face interview. I'd done this many time before and this is exactly what happened on that fateful day just minutes before that thing that I'd most feared came upon me.

Minutes after I finished speaking with a staffing agency about an assignment that I was to take here in the Atlanta area, I noticed a cop from my bedroom window walking in my front yard and approaching the window. My heart raced as I quickly removed myself from his view. My dumb behind had left the curtains opened and now my room was in full view of anyone who happened to peek into the window. I had continued to ignore my sensing that I should close the curtain for such a reason. At least if they didn't know I was home, they wouldn't stick around long and I could peek out to see who had come by. Now I had most likely been spotted by the officer but dashed to the farthest side of the wall in a feudal effort to conceal myself. After hearing a determined knock on my front door, I decided to try to reach my bill fold and make it to the rear of my house in case I needed to run out of there. What was I thinking! Run where! I was panicked, breathing rapidly and becoming more desperate by the second. As I attempted to move off the bed from the wall I was hiding behind, I was suddenly in full view of the cop I had seen in the yard. He pointed his gun at me and told me to keep my hands where he could see them and come to the door. I obeyed, grabbing my watermelon from my desk just because it was there.

As I opened the door and walked out onto the porch, the other officer asked me if my name was Douglas Watts. Up until that time, I really wasn't sure they were coming for me due to probation violation and was comforted by the thought that Cobb County police had been staking out the house next door because the guy who used to live there refused to abandon the house in accordance to the eviction notice being served by them. They had again found him living in the house without any utilities because the landlord, who was his lover, had moved out and told him to vacate the premises. She had also gotten the utilities suspended so he couldn't open another account at that address. I had just seen

the cops talking to him several days earlier and thought they might just want to talk to me regarding whether I'd seen him continuing to live there. This had been my comforting thought up until the point when I was asked that particular question. My heart sank, and I struggled to come up with something deceptive to tell them but quickly decided against it because of the consequences of making deceptive or untrue statements to police officers. Reluctantly, I told them I was him. At that time, I knew it was all over because Cobb police had absolutely no reason to be asking for me. I immediately knew they were serving the warrant issued by Clayton County for my arrest. The officer rifled through the paperwork he had just in case I'd told him a lie and compared the mugshot he had with my face and before I could actually say anything he was telling me, "Yep, that's you!"

"For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." This is a line taken from the book of Job 3:25, and is the fear of many professed Christians in spite of their great faith, or lack thereof. Most of us believers reason that if this happened to Job, who was characterized in Job 2:3 as being ***"... a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil."***, then how can we possibly be spared this misfortune sinning as we do! However, I knew that if I expected to get that ideal fulltime dream job I had to settle up with this criminal account remaining over my head. Better to get it over now than to get that dream job and constantly worry about when the cops would inevitably make a visit to my job to arrest me. Indeed, it would come to pass, as I've witnessed before when cops came and picked me up from work due to violating another probation for DUI which happened to me back in 1995 in Gwinnett county. I knew they would eventually come, and that it was only a matter of time.

What I didn't know was that they would, or could, be sending another police department. I figured as cash-strapped as Clayton County was, they would not bother with the expense of coming to Mableton, GA to get me for probation violation. I foolishly theorized that they would simply wait until I was stopped for a traffic violation or had my ID ran by a police officer. They would certainly see that I had an outstanding warrant for my arrest and lock me up on the spot. This was the insanity that I was hoping to live through until I could summon the courage to turn myself into the authorities. Actually, I've also done this before and that particular situation is captured in a testimonial I've posted on my website called "Douglas ... come forth!" That story has a lot to do with this story so please read it as well. Now it's all over and I would finally pay for my foolishness. I refer to here as foolishness but that's only because I was the one that put myself in such a compromising position. Sure, I could blame any of a half dozen reasons for why it happened but the bottom line was that it happened because I was drinking alcohol at the time. No, I wasn't drunk or anything like that but I should not have been drinking at all ... period!

God has been trying for years to get me to see that even though I've been delivered from hard drugs, I was still too comfortable with drinking, which is only a snare Satan uses to get recovering addicts to relapse. It was only a matter of time, you might say, before I was faced with an undeniable trigger that would cause me to throw my recovery to the wind. Yes, I felt empowered that I could take a drink from time to time without a feeling of relapse. I thought it even signified my victory over drugs, over Satan, and over myself and empowered me to flaunt it at will. This was not God's intention, and was not what He had planned in His purpose for my life. He was trying to show me that with the power given to me, I could simply be myself without anything else, and especially alcohol. God wanted me to know I didn't

need anything but Him and the victories and grace he had favored me with in order to experience the totality of who I was in Him. In some form or fashion, I always thought I needed a little something that wasn't produced by me naturally in order to fully be myself, to be the person that God said I could be, and who I was. This too was a snare of the devil. In the bible, God uses the inhabitants of the land as symbols of corruption and sinfulness. He admonishes the Israelites to not only avoid interbreeding with them but to actually destroy them all – men, women, and children. God understands the repercussions of such associations and constantly exhorts his children to abolish or at least drive them out of the land they are to inherit. God tries to get them to understand that the promise land is reserved for them only and that any other inhabitants will only influence them to follow after other gods.

However, Israel didn't or couldn't see this through and the people they spared became a thorn in their side, and an affliction, a drink of liquor if you will. I believed that to be the same relationship I had with alcohol. Israel probably didn't see anything wrong with sparing the lives of those who inhabited the land before them because intuitively, it seemed the "right" thing to do. However, God tends to work counter-intuitive to our thinking and is considering things we have no clue of in making decisions for us that are designed to help us navigate through life in accordance to his will, and not ours. Likewise, I didn't see anything wrong with social drinking if I wasn't breaking any manmade laws. I wasn't thinking in terms of how it could affect me by causing me to sin more. I wasn't thinking about alcohol's propensity to compel me to fornicate, commit adultery, to lie, to steal, to cheat, and any of a number of things I would regret after the effects of alcohol were long gone.

The police serving the warrant arrested me and I was eventually taken to Clayton County jail to finish out a 90 day sentence for probation violation. I've long decided that under such circumstances I would make the very best of my situation. Since this was the third time I'd served such a sentence in a county jail, I was intent on this being served out just as the others had, making no exception. I'd previously served 19 days in Gwinnett County, 40 days in Clayton County, and now I was doing another sentence of 90 days, and this all within the course 8 years, with Clayton sentences served within the course of about 14 months. My routine was to make that time count towards fulfilling God's purpose for my life by being about Kingdom business. To me this meant teaching Bible study and witnessing to others by carrying myself in a manner that pleased God, and served his purpose instead of mine. This has always come with some very real risks because it has required me to boldly step out on faith and truly believe that God would protect me. This is no easy feat when you're coming into the devil's den to do God's will because Satan's control of those lost souls can be very evident in most cases.

I've always wrote a journal of these experiences as both a pastime and as therapy but the overriding motivation was to create a testimonial of the experience and post it on my website in fulfilling God's purpose for my life. I must admit that this last experience proved to be by far the most risky of them all, and they have all involved their own particular levels or risk, and I do mean real risk, the kind that could have resulted in my death, or at the very least, extreme bodily harm. If you were to ask me where such boldness came from I would like to think from my faith in God but the reality of it is more likely associated with the totality of my life experiences, in particular my experience growing up in Lightning, the community that's so commonly referenced by my website and is the focus of my book Flashes of Lightning. Through this documentation the devil stirred up the most negative of emotions within the cell

and some were targeted towards me, for obvious reasons. I've come to expect that places of incarceration are seldom conducive to advancing God's kingdom, and in most cases there will be a central figure to emerge with the sole intent of mocking and making a contemptuous show of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Most of that story is written and posted on my website with this one, but the reason I say most of the story is there is because only part of it was actually transcribed into digital form. Once I was released from prison, I had foolishly given the entire manuscript to somebody I thought could be trusted to transcribe the written text into digital form by typing it using a word processor on a computer. I'd found this person on Craigslist, which is where I would frequently find people willing to hire themselves out as typists. I'd had very good success with them completed the typing jobs at a minimal cost to me. However, on this particular time I'd neglected to make copies of the manuscript as I should have and foolishly, and trustingly, handed it over to the typist. We had settled on the price she set for the work but I thought it was still a bargain for me. About a week later she called me complaining that she had underestimated the amount of work involved and wanted to raise the price of the job. I resisted at first but decided to meet her halfway, in which she agreed. We then met for her to receive a portion of the money in advance but she would turn over the work she'd completed to me. I was very disappointed by the amount of work she had done and should have considered that a sign of things to come.

Unfortunately, the work she had completed was not inclusive of some of the most relevant writing of the journal. I wanted to have faith that she would complete the journal and there would be no more problems but that was not to happen. Not much time later, she called me telling me she could not, would not, complete the journal at the price we had discussed and that she wanted more, much more. This was a shake-down, clear and plain, and I steadfastly resisted it. I objected out of principle and refused to budge, and told her she could keep the manuscript if she wanted but that she needed to realize who she was doing the work for. I tried to remind her that the work she was doing was for God, and that it would be him who she would have to deal with. I tried to intimidate her with the very real possibility of God taking vengeance on her by causing her to suffer his wrath.

She was not intimidated, and seemed to delight in the fact that it was God's work she was interfering with. It then struck me that I had so conveniently turned over a very important piece of work for advancing God's kingdom without the slightest idea it could be intercepted by the enemy himself. I could sense the presence of Satan in this person's delight of what they had accomplished and suddenly felt a sense of defeat that I could be so naïve and careless regarding the things of God. I vowed it would never happen again but how I could get the manuscript without paying an exorbitant amount of money was another matter. I also ran the risk of not getting it back at all even if I wanted to pay. I prayed about it and even asked the advice of others but I didn't think they knew enough about it to make the best decision. One of my closest advisors even suggested I, "Pay the lady" for it. Unfortunately, my spirit was not "feeling" that, and I started to think about this person's state of mind, and what she could possibly be capable of doing to me if she had so little regard of God's wrath for what she had purposely done! I don't think my friend ever considered it from that perspective so I made the decision not to pay her. I got a call from her a few months later trying to convince me that the work was a worthy piece of writing and that I should get it published. Again, she was trying to shake me down for money and by this time I

really had no time for her so I found a convenient reason to hang up on her without ever calling her back. I then deleted her number from my phone so I wouldn't give in to her demands.

I've since thought about all that and maybe if I still had her number I'd call her to see if we could reach an agreement on the price for her to give me back my manuscript un-typed, which is what I'd been trying to do all along. She simply refused to return my manuscript back to me at all ... period, without me paying her to give it back. Paying her to finish typing it was not even the issue at this point. She seemed to be taunting me with the possibility of getting back the manuscript but had no true intention of giving it back at all. It was so indicative of something I thought Satan would do in light of the situation. She finally stopped calling but I can't help thinking if she has felt the wrath of God by this time or was it only wishful thinking on my part. I guess I'll never know ... at least not in this lifetime.

The point being, much of what I experienced while boldly stepping out on faith in Clayton County goes unwritten, though not unlearned or unshared. I've posted what I was able to salvage with the expectation of eventually completing as much of it as I can remember. My problem is that I truly hate rewriting anything. I think I take the proverb, "The writing hand writes, and once written moves on!" too literally. I tend to think of my writing as a one-time thing, and wasteful of my time when I rewrite it. What's so interesting is that a big portion of what I'd written had been rewritten from a previous writing so to rewrite it again would actually be the third writing of the original writing. Whew! Please ... not again! I've promised myself I'd do it so stay tuned for future updates. This was actually something I needed to understand and don't know why I was so unprepared to protect myself from it. I've always taken great pride in how I usually perceive Satanic movement in my life as a personification of Satan's character and behavior but to miss seeing happening as a result of having someone type something I'd written, and just happened to not make a copy of the original, was something I never attributed to Satan's character. I was a sitting duck you might say, and Satan capitalized on it. It was a very impressive victory for him as far as that battle was concerned but I'm still the victorious one as far as the war is concerned.

This abuse of my trust and the underlying source of it drove home the true meaning of the need for me to "be somber, be vigilant, for the adversary, the devil, walketh about seeking whom he might devour." I've known this spiritual warfare thing was real but to have that done to me I think allowed God to give me better revelation concerning the works of the devil. This was truly enlightening to me and taught me a lesson I hope to never forget.

After I was released from Clayton County, I had forfeited my rental agreement and had been evicted from the premises by the landlord. However, I did manage to have a friend of mine to pick up a lot of stuff that had been set outside on the front porch. The landlord herself had managed to go by the house asking for me since she had not received return calls to her inquiries about the rent. By the time she heard from me it was from jail on the phone making a collect call to her, which she graciously accepted, quite to my surprise. I told her what had befallen me but she expressed a determined dissatisfaction with my situation. To her shock and amazement, I was still trying to preserve our business relationship as landlord-renter in hopes that God would fix everything for me. I knew this was a longshot but what did I have to lose. I put it all on the line but her response in no uncertain terms was a resounding no

way! As I would set in my jail cell, I thought how much that little house seemed to be for me and how much I wanted to live back there. I would place it squarely into God's hands.

What happened once I got out and moved to a friend's house temporarily was exactly the reason I had pinned my hopes on possibly moving back into that house. I managed to get a job working for Marta which was paying me a lot of money for a contract assignment that was supposed to eventually be permanent work. They sent me the contract with the amount of money I'd be earning and so I sent it to the landlord in an email for her to see. It had exactly the effect on her I was hoping for and once I started talking about being able to pay her the delinquent payments for rent I owed her, she finally began to soften her position regarding renting property to me. It just so happened that my house was back on the market after another tenant defaulted on the rent. Man, I was so happy and just had to attribute everything to God's mercy and favor. This to me was truly a blessing and moving back into my old house had me on top of the world.

Unfortunately, the Marta gig would not last as long as I thought it would and I was soon without a job. For some reason I felt abandoned by God and deliberately placed in a position of humility by him. After all, I had not drunk any alcohol, had attended church on a regular basis, paid my tithe religiously, and for the most part lived a wholesome life, at least relatively speaking. I couldn't figure out why this sudden misfortune had befallen me and God seemed a very likely cause. Why had I been given such a remarkable opportunity to move back into my old house if only to evicted within a 6 month period of time? I grew furious just thinking about it and begin to pick up an old habit once again – drinking! I wanted to somehow get away from it all by dulling the pain and throwing my hands up in utter defeat. Yes, I wanted to give the entire victory to Satan and concede that he was the better man, that I couldn't beat him, that I had grown weary of the whole battle. I can remember praying to God one day and crying out to him asking why I had been so abandoned and seemingly alienated by him when I thought I was doing what he wanted me to do. I thought that I "deserved" more consideration from him because of my "works" and my faith. I let him know how disappointed and angry, yes angry, I was with him for not allowing me to receive favor from him according to my works, and not his grace!

I know, as many believers do, that we receive God's favor as a matter of his mercy and grace towards us, and not according to our works. Well, at least it's easy to deduce this when you consider the scripture, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph 2:8. Of course I get this but I specifically thought it was pertaining to being "saved". I lacked the spiritual discernment at the time to see that it also applies to our every encounter with God. Sure God wants us to live according to his will, and to a large degree his blessings come through our obedience to his will. However, we must never forget the story of Job, and how Job was this "good and upright" man in God's eye, as well as the eye of Satan. Yet Job was not beyond God's lack of favor and grace when it came to kingdom work because what kingdom work trumps our petty selfishness and self-centeredness. I later realized through the revelation given me that my vision and wants paled in light of God's overall purpose for my life and I thank him for it.

God's purpose for my life is not about me! It's about his kingdom, or else it wouldn't be his purpose for my life. I was stuck momentarily on thinking it was my purpose for my life, instead of his. It was because

of this twisted thinking that I became angry at God, and demanded to know why my self-professed righteousness had not been enough! Now, I shudder to think if things had worked out the way I wanted them to work out. Now I truly understand the scripture that says, "All our righteousness are as filthy rags in his sight." Isa 64:6. I have discerned this to mean that God will not, and cannot, be bought off or bribed into showing us mercy or grace. The most we can hope for is to trust that our lives are in line with his master plan, with kingdom work. The bible is indeed our roadmap for aligning ourselves with God's kingdom work, and not our own. This happens to be just the opposite of what's being preached in many churches today in America. Most pastors preach what's now being labeled "Prosperity Gospel" which postulates that God will bless us with financial prosperity if we do certain things like pay our tithes, come to church, actively participate in a church ministry, and support the church's efforts to evangelize new members. There are other reasons as well that are specific to each church but the point I'm trying to make is that after neglecting to do such things on a consistent basis, I finally thought I was really in-line with God's will because of doing them.

When God gave me revelation, I realized that these were the "things of men" and had to do very little with the kingdom work that really matters. I should have known this but I wanted it to be about me and blinded by my own self-worth thought I had a right to financial prosperity. In all fairness, God didn't deny me prosperity; he only delayed it. But it gave me the chance to ponder on why God had, in my mind, denied it. It also helped me to break free from the chains of men placing demands on me that were very trivial to the kingdom work at hand which is actually a warfare and dependent on each of us to fight a spiritual battle that far overshadows such meagerness. I had to ask myself where was the demand to live according to biblical principles, laws, and commandments that receive overwhelming and resounding declarations of observance. I had to question how can paying your tithe and doing this other stuff overshadow God's command for us to not fornicate or commit adultery? How can the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be so persuaded to bless us with prosperity when he severely punished those people for challenging his will and his command to obey him.

I had to admit I was being brainwashed in spite of the fact that I have read the entire bible over 10 times, and am very aware of God's hatred of sin. Sure Jesus died for our sins and his death paid the price in God's eyes but the truth of the matter is that it didn't do away with God's hatred of it. Nowhere in the bible does God reward willful sin with prosperity, and the bible is supposed to serve as an example of God's interactions with man. That's how we know him, and measure his greatness and awesomeness. The bible reveals to us God's essence and creates his personification and character in such a way that our encounter with him is just as real and meaningful as it is with other men. That's why the bible refers to him as the "living God".

One of the problems with the church is that it no longer sees sin as something more important to concern oneself with as it does tithing, or ministry, or attending church, or giving to the church, or giving to the pastor's anniversary, giving to the building fund, to missionary work, or in any of a number of ways the Pastors can think of to separate you from your money! Now, I'm not condemning such giving, and such giving does have its place but not at the expense of allowing sin to flourish in the church and go unnoticed, un-attacked, or un-condemned. For a while there I actually thought I should have been rewarded for such petty practice, while I was still not living according to God's will. In spite of all I was

doing, my righteousness was as filthy rags to him and he let me know it. I now understand this much better than I ever have and feel a sense of liberation from the demands placed on me by men. I'm not so easy to feel out of God's will for my life when I come up short according to what man thinks I should be doing. This is actually what the bible should comfort us with anyway and this lesson has been well learned by me.

Eventually, I would become evicted once again from the house I had come to think was a gift from God, and that it was his will for me to continue living there. I moved in with a childhood friend I'd known since I was 9 years old who was from Lightning, the community I lived in briefly, but would adopt a state of mind for years to come. Quite frankly, I'm from Lightning! That's how I've always identified myself to myself as being. It's a long story but as I mentioned earlier, it's also posted on my website. My friend's name is Sam and we were once very good friends when we were young. I kind of looked up to Sam because he was 2 years older and nobody messed with him. He had a hair-trigger temper and would cry when he fought you because he would become just that emotional. The real reason nobody messed with him was because his older brothers had reputations for kicking asses if anybody bothered him. Me, I had no such protection and had to make my own way. You might say I had a practical interest in befriending older guys who didn't take any mess to employ as my big brother.

Sam welcomed me with open arms and I was relieved he did. It was mostly due to me helping him out financially when I got the job with Marta. However, Sam lived in a very depressed section of Atlanta that was infested with drugs, alcoholism, gangs, and violence. It was not the kind of place I thought God would be taking me to but it was home for now. I settled in and started back drinking as I had been doing at the other place. Yes, it was now only the "other place" since there was no longer any special relevance it held. As you might guess, I continued to spiral down out of control and even stopped attending church, and to a large degree, stopped praying to God. I simply couldn't get the idea of God abandoning me out of my head.

After a while, the willfully sinful life I was living began to get old and now my old instincts to press on in spite of my tribulations began to kick in and take control of my behavior. One of the things that staying in the Word does is it conditions you subconsciously to implement the biblical principles, knowledge, and wisdom taught by it. I started to find myself incapable of giving up, of surrendering to hopelessness, of throwing in the towel, so to speak, as I had wanted to do. Over the years I had been programmed to succeed regardless of the situation, drawing strength and resolve from the bible and through prayer. I soon began to yearn for this state of mind and without it felt incomplete and wanting. I'd always know, at least I had heard a sermon once, where the pastor at a church I attended while living in Seattle had preached how we should seek to get back to that place in our lives where God had once blessed us before. To me, it was a very logical progression from a place of utter despair and financial bankruptcy to a known place of relief. I call it getting back to plumb, which is exactly where the bible tries to keep us. T

The word plumb is a technical concept applied by carpenters to determine if the edge of a structure is pointed directly towards the center of the earth, resulting in a straight line up and down. Sometimes this is referred to as "on point" or "dead center". That's kind of what the bible attempts to do with us by keeping us on point and dead center of what God expects from us. The bible says of Jeremiah when he

despaired of his trials while doing God's work, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name. But his word was in mine heard as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer 20:9. This is exact how I had felt during this time in my life and just didn't want to talk about God at all. However, now I was beginning to feel incomplete and outside my comfort zone because I had been condition myself, at least God had been conditioning me, to keep it moving and to never give up or give in. I found this remarkably astonishing that I was at a place where I couldn't even sabotage my life even when I tried.

God had placed his stamp upon me and now I was beginning to see that it was in him that I lived, and moved, and had my being! I begin to sense that God would not allow me to give up on myself because he had a purpose for my life that was resistant to my petty selfishness, and my self-destructive tendencies. I soon reached a point where I wanted God to have his way in my life and begin to let go, and let God, so to speak. I soon stopped drinking cold-turkey, started back attending church, and praying. In short, I started back doing what came natural for me to do, and that was to be about God's business, about his purpose for my life because I found out that at this point I'm completely hardwired to be about his business. As Paul mentions time and again in different areas of scripture, "I Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ ...", is indicative to how I feel regarding my relationship with Jesus Christ.

I'm totally convinced that God's will is for me to fulfil his purpose for my life and I have very little to do with it. It's as natural for me to accomplish as it is breathing. I can't even imagine my life without doing what I have been called to do, regardless of how minor or insignificant others may find it. This is the reason for my hope, the reason for my positive outlook on life and I'm becoming more and more convinced that God will have my back regardless of my circumstances, or how much I might think I'm pleasing him by trying to please man! This is the basis for my liberation. This is what convinced me to come out of the spiraling downfall I was caught up in.

Once I stopped drinking I was able to utilize enough clarity in my life to start back looking for a job. Up to this point I had been depending on an unemployment check that was just enough to pay my meager bills and sustain my drinking and the running around I was doing. I was first blessed by God with a contract doing 100% remote work as a SharePoint admin and developer, which is was not at all improbable for me as it was timely. God is an on-time God, and this is how I've come to define his hand in my life. That's how I know it was God, and not due to my own efforts apart from him. At the time, it was exactly what I needed to mend me, and to help me transition back into where I was before, and on to where God wanted to take me. It was so empowering for me to know that God was still on my side and had my back, and this job became my pathway back to my sanity and self-worth. I felt destined to be successful and to overcome my adversities.

As my sobriety took control of my life, God blessed me with a 100% remote assignment doing SharePoint development and administration for a local company here in Atlanta, of all things. Normally, such opportunities are located in other parts of the county and they fly you in for meetings ever so often. It was no problem for me to go to the initial meeting to discuss the work requirements but the fact that I didn't have a computer of my own, normally a necessary requirement, was a sign to me that God indeed did have my back and had taken care of all my needs. What's so interesting about all this is I

fully expected for God to make a way out of no way! I never shared with the staffing agency or the hiring manager that I didn't have a computer of my own to complete the work, and instinctively knew that if it was God's will for me to have this job he would supply all my needs. That's exactly how it happened.

After I worked doing this for a while, I was able to purchase a 1994 Volkswagon GTI from a private owner. I didn't come to realize the car was considered a classic by many until folks started asking me if I wanted to sell it. Although it needed a lot of body work, as well as mechanical work, I decided to keep it in case I got a chance to restore it properly. Now I was riding and didn't have to take public transportation for interviewing. This was a huge relief, and the new car was also air conditioned, which was a must for summers in Atlanta. But God wasn't done with me yet. After working remotely for several months, I managed to save enough money to buy a 2001 Cadillac Eldorado. It was pearl white with a false soft-top complete with a sunroof. I'd never seen such a top on any cars before and knew I had to have it. Amazingly, I purchased it from a car dealer just starting out in the business. For some reason I wanted to step out on faith and believe this was all being done by God and made the purchase in spite of going through a dealer, who tend to be notoriously untrustworthy when it comes to getting a good deal. The fact that the car was below market value didn't seem to bother the car salesman who was also the owner of the dealership. I was very impressed by his sense of doing business, and he even allowed me to make a small deposit and drive the car off the lot the same day. Now I had a car that more was more reflective of where I was, and where I was trying to go in life. I felt God was preparing me for something big.

Then, it finally happened. I was online at a coffee shop in my neighborhood doing some remote work for the company I was employed by when I got a phone call from a talent recruiter from Cox Communications. We started out chatting in general about my SharePoint work experience but there was never a mention of a particular job opening. After he felt I'd answered his questions satisfactorily, he was about to hang up the phone when he happened to mention something about a job opening that would be taking place at a later date but the hiring manager had expressed an interest in trying to find someone with a particular skillset. He said that the manager was interested in talking with someone who had both SharePoint administration and development experience. This peaked my interest and I saw an opportunity to talk more about my experience and how it could be of value to him.

I went on to speak more specific and in much greater detail to him, being mindful of his ignorance on the subject matter however. It was as if something was compelling me to talk and the word were gushing out of me non-stop as I emphasized and clarified the experience I felt relative to the task. I could sense the recruiter was growing increasingly interested in what I was saying as signaled by his constant "uh, huh ... Ok ... I see Mmmhfff," and other verbal gestures articulated without formal sentence structure but indicating undeniable acceptance. While I continued to recite my very verbose diatribe, the recruiter suddenly interrupted me and asked if I would be available to come in for an interview the next day? I was taken totally by surprise by his sudden interest in pitching a job interview to me but quickly told him yes if he could manage it in such short of a time. (I was equally delighted to see that my efforts to impress him had paid off such dividends. However, I do concede that it was all God's doing.)

He quipped that he could. At least he thought he could - based on the indicated requirements of the hiring manager. Immediately, I felt the hand of God was all in this and began to speak with the confidence that this was not happening by coincidence but was being authored by God himself. I became so excited at what was taking place and smiled to myself but under the circumstances had to stand up from sitting down at the table. I had to just walk around so I could take it all in because it was overwhelming me mentally, psychologically, and emotionally. I was walking in the clouds even though at that point I still didn't have the job. The recruiter said he would give me a call back after he'd spoken to the hiring manager. I gave an affirmation regarding his comment and couldn't wait to get off the phone so I could release all the emotions I was starting to feel. I tend to get like this when God's hand is unmistakably moving in my life. I couldn't sit back down and had to walk around outside praising God and thanking him. I live for those moments and wish everyone was as favored as I am so they could experience them for themselves. The recruiter called back a few minutes later as he said but asked me if I could be available the next day to speak with the manager. I told him sure and got the details for the phone call.

This all well and good but it only gave me less than a day to prepare for an interview that was going to be very technical in nature because he had told me the manager was very technical. I then looked up the manager on LinkedIn.com to get an idea of just how technical he was. I was blown away by what I discovered and immediately started to wonder if it was a good idea to speak with this guy. This guy was more than technical. In the SharePoint world, he would be considered a God, a guru, an expert, or even a consummate SharePoint expert! I decided that it was much too late to prepare so instead I would fashion a pitch for him, and leave the rest to God. The next day during our meeting this is exactly what I did. I knew if he pressed me for details on the wrong things I would blow the interview but I continued to give him much of the same spiel I gave the recruiter. I just opened my mouth, put my faith in God, and the words seemed to pour forth.

Amazingly, it had pretty much the same effect on the manager and I even sensed him aiding me in presenting my spiel as if he were grooming me, preparing me to repeat the same thing to someone else. To my astonishment, I was right! He asked me to come in to speak with him in a couple of days and so I did. I spoke with his boss, and his boss's boss. My interview with his boss's boss was something I didn't know would take place but I managed to say the right things in spite of the fact he wasn't at all technical. When I spoke with his manager, he was present with me and was actually setting up the questions for me to answer them pretty much the way he had asked me himself. He was asking all the right questions he knew would present me in the best light, as though he was trying to sell my hiring to them as well. I was very impressed by these very apparent, at least to me, attempts to get me hired.

I left the interview thinking that I at least had the vote of the hiring manager if no one else but knew I needed to impress them all. I asked him for the job and we talked at length about what my responsibilities would be. I felt we connected and established a great rapport with this initial interview. I asked if there would be another round and he said they wanted to move quickly on this hiring but that they were looking at other candidates as well. I left him with the usual courtesies of hoping to see him again. I felt the interview went well but could have been better, which is how I always felt. Now I would be chumping at the bit waiting for the call on what the decision was.

After about 2 days he called me to tell me they were going to make me an offer! I was beside myself and quickly got that urge again to stand up and walk around outside the coffee shop. I was pacing up and down the sidewalk in sheer amazement of how this was all happening as if by design. He told me how much the offer would be and it was much more than I expected but I tried to remain calm and unsurprised by the numbers. He then went on to ask me for more information I could tell him that would increase my value to the company and as before I opened my mouth, put my faith in God, and the words just poured out. To my astonishment he said that he would increase the offer to me himself by \$1,000 dollars! I could not believe my ears!!! This guy was responding to what I'd told him and made the unilateral decision to increase the offer to me himself. This is not only rare but is generally not heard of in the world of recruitment unless they're trying to get, and keep, a talent that's not at all common on the market. Since this area was his specialty, he knew guys like me were very hard to find, and to keep, because of the shortage of good people. I was floored, and thanked him while trying to hurry him off the phone so I could go through my traditional ceremony of praising and thanking God.

Ok, now that was over and now would come the moment of truth. It was background check time, which typically presented the most challenging phase of the job process. Background checks can vary widely depending on the company performing it, the criteria used, and the level of risk a company is willing to accept with hiring their employees. Some companies have a zero-risk policy which means if you have even misdemeanors of any consequence it could disqualify you for employment. If the company had a high-risk policy, it could mean the company was willing to accept anyone who didn't have a felony. Rarely do companies who employ people like me hire ex-felons. Actually, I don't think any of them do. Since I didn't know anything about the hiring practice at Cox, this was a big unknown to me and something I would need to leave in the hands of God. I deduced that God would not have created this situation for me just to have it blow up in my face.

I would need to step out on faith in a grand way and increase my prayer power. This called for me getting plumb, on point, and dead-center on everything concerning my relationship to God. At least I knew to do this so most of the work was already done! I completed the background check, consisting of a criminal and credit check and sent the information in accordingly. I also elected to be mailed the results of the checks just so I would have an idea when the company would likely have received the information back. That way I could give the recruiter a call after I received the results, which would imply that it was likely the company had received them as well. I received the results after about 3 weeks, which took much longer than I'd thought. After about a week passed, I decided to give the recruiter a call because I was chumping at the bit to find out if a decision had been made. The waiting had been traumatic for me and kept me in such an unsure state of mind concerning everything and the last thing I wanted to do was lose faith.

I was successful in reaching the recruiter and my call couldn't have been more timely. He said that due to some discretions on my criminal background check my file had been turned over to the legal department. My heart sunk and I started to hyperventilate and sweat at once while taking a stand from the table in the coffee shop. I begin to see all my hope dissolve into thin air as he went on to talk, then suddenly putting me on hold. While I was holding, I couldn't help but think the worse and tried to muster the resolve to hold on to my faith and to consider the positive side of things. Maybe this was just

a formality, I surmised, and things would work out in spite of it all. As I continued to hang on to such delusions of grandeur, the recruiter came back on the line and told me the call he had just put me on hold for was the legal department telling him I was good to go. When he told me this my spirits soared into the heavens with the burst of the big bang, which signaled the creation of all we know.

I was speechless, stood up again from the table and again went outside to relieve myself of the awesomeness of the situation. God had done it! God had circumvented every obstacle thrown in my path back to where he wanted me to be. I felt myself transitioning into more of a celebratory state of mind and wanted someone to celebrate this victory with me. I started to share my good fortune with the barristers who served the coffee. I even went as far as dumping a \$10 tip into the tip jar. I was feeling on top of the world. I needed to vent all the pent-up emotions that were boiling up within me and share how I was feeling with others as if they could somehow tap into this moment of pleasure and ecstasy I was feeling.

I was feeling on top of the world and tried to wrap my mind around what had happened because based on the criminal background report, they had actually overlooked, or at least had not bothered by what they found but I still found it hard to believe they approved me. No, I didn't have any felonies but I had enough misdemeanors to raise some red flags and apparently that's exactly what I did by them running everything pass the legal department to see what the legal ramifications were. For them to decide in my favor I'm convinced was an act of God. I thank God for it each day, and will continue to do so. However, making sense of exactly what had happened from a spiritual perspective was another matter. God began to give me revelation into this as well, and brought me to see that he really does have a bigger plan than we do for our lives. Before my faith was challenged I was willing to accept being employed tentatively by Marta with no real career growth or benefits. The job with Marta was not something I would have been happy with although it paid the bills. I would have very quickly become unhappy with it because the IT department was severely overworked and understaffed. The IT guys I met who worked there were not happy at all with how they were treated, and it was all contract work. Marta didn't hire full time IT employees.

God was arranging my life to meet the demands, and also the promises, of his purpose for my life. I knew what I wanted, but God knew what I needed, and what I needed to be successful in fulfilling his purpose for my life was to be happy and gainfully employed. Employment with Cox was more than anything I could ask or think, as scripture promises. I was living proof that it happened that way if we don't give up or give in over the long run. When we belong to God, he plants a seed of victory in us that remains dormant, but alive, even when we think all hope is gone. Then at just the right time, the right season, the seed gives birth to the hope necessary to pull us out of the despair overwhelming our lives. This is our guarantee of everlasting life! I know for a fact that my recovery had nothing to do with my natural strength or resolve. I could never have done it because I didn't particularly want to recover. I wanted to continue to spiral down into the abyss of hopelessness, not caring what my state would be once I hit absolute rock bottom. I was encouraging it for my life even. I wanted to do exactly what Satan was orchestrating in my life without lifting a finger to do anything about it.

But God! But God said that I was more than a conqueror through him who loved me, that greater was he inside me than he who was in the world, that no weapon formed against me would prosper! But first I had to let go, and let God. This is the key! It's also counter-intuitive to the natural man, which is what so many followers of Christ struggle with because they think it has to make sense to them or God is not in it. The bible speaks that God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. For us to try to conform and constrict how God works in our lives has to be the greatest form of arrogance. How can the pot, whom the potter fashioned of clay, say to the potter what you're doing doesn't make sense to me? It seems to me that if we let go and let God, he becomes our reserve parachute when our primary chute fails. However, all that needs to happen on our part is to continue free-falling so the chute can deploy automatically instead of us trying to rip it out of its hosing through our frantic efforts to save ourselves. Yes, this is counter-intuitive but it's the way God seems to take delight in rescuing us. He wants to assist us without any effort on our part so we know exactly where our deliverance came from and can take no glory of self in it. God wants to remove us from the equation altogether, lest any man should boast in their works and not in God's mercy. God wants us to take a leap of faith without any help from us. God wants absolutely all the glory ... and rightfully so!

As I mentioned earlier, this has been a liberating experience for me from the snares of men who would distort the word of God to serve their own selfish interests. I think God wanted to use this experience to free me from a lot of the non-sense associated with Christianity these days. As followers of Jesus Christ, our battle is not carnal, but spiritual and this should be by far the most important information that comes out of the churches other than the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as ones Lord and Savior. I think the mere fact that most churches today spend more time on a prosperity gospel, on tithes and offerings, and on serving in church ministries designed to give folks something to do within the church, is the primary cause of spiritual atrophy and worldliness in the church.

I digress, but such practices and theological impotence does little to prepare oneself from the hellishly vicious attack being waged by Satan's kingdom. In truth, the church is spiritually being burned to the ground while those inside give praise and thanks for the little amount of material possessions they've managed to glean out of this life! Instead of the church launching an offensive against the forces of evil, it has reduced itself to being defensive, and subsequently distracted by the god of this world. This is what God has liberated me from and has and given me authority over! To God be all the glory, who has delivered me from everything that held me bound and has shown me more favor than I ever hoped for in this lifetime. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in my eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it. I beseech thee, oh Lord. Oh Lord I beseech thee. Send now prosperity!

I started work for Cox Communications on Monday, November 10th 2014 where I was scheduled to attend a 2 day orientation class. I quickly adapted to my new environment and responsibilities and won the favor of all my peers. On Thanksgiving day I received a call from a property manager wanting to talk to me about some rental property I'd inquired about. I told her she had caught me spending the day with family but I'd contact her the following day. The next day I called her about the property and we arranged a meeting for me to check the house out. It was only one of several other houses I'd left messages of inquiry about but hadn't heard from anyone else. She gave me a tour of the house, which

happened to be in the Mableton area where I had once lived earlier. I evaluated the neighborhood and concluded it to be ideal for living. I quickly completed the rental application and was immediately delighted by how brief it was in terms of the information requested. The form content was barely legible - a sure sign to me that the completed form was only a necessary formality. In addition, the property manager stated that she would let me know if I was approved the next day

Now, this wasn't my first "rodeo" as far as renting houses was concerned and again I saw this as a sign that God had already set this up for me. As I suspected, the very next day the lady told me I had been approved. She and her husband had made this decision without checking a single reference or my employment information. You might say they saw my job title and the amount of money I made, and I'm sure driving up in my big beautiful Cadillac Eldorado didn't hurt matters. I was so excited about all that had happened to me and delighted in the fact that it was God who had made it all possible. The house has 3 bedrooms, dining, living, and even a Florida room. It has a 2 tier deck outside, 2 car garage, huge front yard, small side yard, and backyard. From the back, my house overlooks the houses down in the lower part of the area like a stately mansion that sits on top of a hill. From the back it's much larger than it looks from the front. It's just the thing for a person of royal blood, who happens to be a child of the high King. I can't say enough about his place and I'm even more astonished now as I was when I first got the place now that it's furnished.

I could easily live here for the rest of my life but I think that God is preparing me for something more grandeur while I'm here on Earth. I shudder to think what he has planned for me next and know it will be something much more astonishing and fit for the child of a King!