

How I got to here to Chicago

The story of how I was able to get here to Chicago is something that is so indicative of divine intervention, and how God truly works, that I myself find it extremely hard to believe. It all started after I ran out of money after living one extended stay motel after another for about 3 months. After my money was all gone, I was forced to move out and live in my car which I usually parked at a Kroger supermarket parking lot near Cascade Rd and I-285. That area was great because it allowed me to use the public library computers to do my job searching after I had to eventually pawn both my laptops and everything else of value I had that I could pawn also.

The only thing I had left of value was my cell phone, which I couldn't do without since this was my life-line to the recruiters and Human Resources personnel. Eventually, my cell phone would be turned off because I was dependent on a friend of mine to pay me the \$50.00 he owed me. I would have cell phone service until the 4th of the month and he was supposed to pay me on that day but he told me that he was not at home in order to do so. Well, I had a car, and could go and pick up the money but he made it seem as though it was impossible for him to do regardless. Obviously, he didn't know that I had a phone interview scheduled for the next day and needed my phone to have service. I was heartbroken. It was mostly because when he had needed my help to pay his way out of being locked up for his probation situation, I came drove all the way back to Atlanta from Erie, PA, non-stop for 14 hours just so I could get him the money on time.

Yes, he seemed to have forgotten about that. Afterwards, I started to hold out hope that my phone service would be on long enough the next day for me to finish the interview. I didn't care what happened after that. Consequently, the phone was turned off before the interview could take place. Now my only reason for existing was to get my phone turned back on but I needed extended access to a phone in order to try and reschedule the interview, and try to borrow some money from a friend to get my service turned back on. I decided to call on a friend of mine and asked if I could maybe live there for a few days. My friend agreed and gave me a few dollars for gas as well. I was able to reschedule the interview for a few days later, and was also able to borrow the money I needed to pay my phone bill from another friend and quickly went to get it turned back on. With my service back on, I ended up making an impression on the person who interviewed me and was offered the job. I was my 3rd time speaking with these people over the phone over a span of about a month and a half. The reason for the long delay was mostly due to it being the Thanks Giving and Christmas season. Most companies apparently

had decided to do their hiring after the new year. However, my start date would not be determined until my references had been checked. To me, it was another untimely setback. I decided to move from my friends place because this company was simply dragging their foot, and I needed to get back to the Kroger parking lot so I could use the computers at the library in the area. My money was gone, and I was down to eating baloney sandwiches for every meal for about a week. The next weekend, I decided that I was going to stop thinking about me so much and start thinking about what I should be doing for the Lord. Putting myself before God was not working so I needed to put things in there proper perspective. Fortunately, I still had some of my Christian tracts that I used to give out that pointed people to my Christian website which was actually where I did my greatest witnessing because people had time to digest all that I was trying to tell them as for as what the Lord had done for me, and the many miracles God had performed in my life. In effect, it was where I posted my testimonies, and inspirational words of wisdom I had acquired over the years.

It would be on the next Sunday that I would choose to get out there and do my thing because the day promised to be a very beautiful and relatively warm day, at least for a day in January. Most of the previous week had been very cold, which influenced me to wait for a warmer day. I prepared myself by praying in my car to God for the strength and courage to get out there and work boldly in his honor, and advance his kingdom. I learned over the years that this is something that is very necessary because we can't do the Lord's will in our own strength. I remember when a friend of mine would try to influence me to witness to people on the streets while passing out Christian tracts but to me it was something that was so far from what I could ever see myself doing. I was terrified of doing that, but would tell him I would get around to it soon. What I thought was that he was doing it by his own strength but learned later that he would have to get prayed up as I had done this day in order to get out there boldly.

As I began to pass out the tracts, occassions would avail themselves for me to witness as well, and tell them something about me, and my relationship with God. Shortly, I got a call on my phone and for some reason I answered it, even though I knew it was a recruiter, which I never did on the weekends, especially on Sundays. The recruiter asked me if I was still available so I told him yes, kind of, but the company is taking there time about checking my references so that they could give me a start date. I later found out that he had been someone who was trying to recruit me for another position before I went up to Erie, PA, about 4 months ago. The job in Erie was actually supposed to have lasted for at least a year but it ended rather abruptly after 4 weeks when I was told that they had decided to go in another direction. I could give you the real reason for their decision but it is a moot point because ***“all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, and who are called according to his purpose (Rm 8:28 KJV).”***

It was about \$123K per year, but it only lasted for the 4 weeks – still a very nice payday for me! It was the first time I had made 6 figures at all, regardless of how short the time. My previous 3 jobs had paid \$94K but they were very shortterm positions as well. Sorry, I digress. Anyway, the recruiter asked me how much that company was willing to pay me so I told him it was \$104K/hr and was also a chance to work remotely, which is a very good sell. I was actually looking forward to not going into an office, but simply roaming to wherever I wanted to in order to do my work. After I had gotten a taste of what it was like when I was working with an ex-employer back in November, I was sold on the idea of working remotely.

The recruiter knew I would be a tough sell so he went for the gusto and said that he could get me between \$80-85/hr. I quickly said, yes, I'm listening, but how would I get to Chicago? He said the company would pay for my plane fare as well as my hotel stay for the whole length of time I would be up there, and that I would also get \$70 per diem. He went on to say that he could get me a phone interview either that day or the next day, which would be Monday. I was impressed with his confidence for doing that, and even more impressed when he told me he and the person doing the hiring had been childhood friends, and that he had searched for about two weeks for someone who had the qualifications to do the work. Again, I felt honored that after two weeks he had narrowed his search to only me. He told me that the guy would really be sizing me up to see if I was qualified, and if I would be a good fit for there environment. We said goodbye and I went back to witness and passing out my tracts. By the time I finished, I was too focused on what I had done for God and gave very little thought to what the recruiter had said to me.

As fate would have it, early the next day I got a call from the recruiter around 9am telling me that he had indeed set up the interview and that the guy would be calling me at 11:30am. The hiring manager called as scheduled and we spoke at length for about 45 minutes. By the time I hung up, I had been offered the position at a pay of \$80/hr plus \$70 per diem, which comes out to be around \$166K/yr plus the per diem – an all time high salary for me! However, the contract is for a little over 3 months but could become either permanent or remote work on an as-needed basis, which is still cool. The main thing is I needed that much money over the 3 month period in order for me to effect some serious credit repair so I can get out of debt for good. The manager had told me to expect my itenary by the middle of the week, and gave me a start date for the next Monday. Now, I had some real big issues because I had gotten my license taken from me for driving with suspended licenses, something I had no idea of. I later found out it was because of failing to appear in a courtroom up in Lexington, KY for entering an off ramp which, according to the police, was closed to traffic. The police were at the bottom of the ramp waving flash lights as though they were telling me to slow down and move to the right away from them. I slowed down, moved to the right side of the ramp but all of a sudden they started

yelling at me and moving in my direction. I stopped suddenly, not know what was going on, and asked them what was happening.

They told me that the ramp was closed, and asked me why I had entered it. They point up to the top of the ramp, about 75 yards, and asked me didn't I see the sign. Since it was dark, I said no, how could I know the sign was up there. I flippantly told them that sign should have been at the bottom of the ramp so drivers like me could see it. I think this irritated them and then they started looking for reasons to detain me. After a while, there were 3 cops deciding my fate while I was simply trying to get to Erie to start my new job. Then one asked what they could charge me with, even while they were within earshot of me. They decided to charge me with obstruction of the law, failing to yield to traffic signs, and reckless driving. I waited thinking they were going to give me some tickets until they asked me to get out of the car. Consequently, they detained me and only releasing me after I agreed to pay a bond of \$200 cash, in which I had to pay an additional \$100 to get my vehicle out of impound. I knew I had a court date the next day at 1pm but I decided to hightail it out of there for fear that they would try to come up with another way to fleece me for money or detain me. For me, it was a necessary risk, especially if I expected to get to Erie on time. In light of this situation, I felt it was best to get out of town right then, so I did.

Now, it was all coming back to haunt me. There I was with a job offer but no money to get a state ID so I could catch the flight to Chicago. Neither did I have any winter clothing suitable for the Chicago winter. This new job had created some seemingly insurmountable problems for me in addition to providing me with a way out of my situation. I started praying for God to lead me in the path I needed to go in order to make this work. I tried to keep the faith that God would not provide this blessing if he could not make a way out of no way for me. I started calling people I thought might help me, or at least be able to help me. I contacted one friend and told him what was going on with me and he said that he would help me out with the ID and may a few dollars for food. I met him the next day and God bless him, he gave me \$50. I was so grateful because my hopes depended on God making a way out of no way. I purchase the ID, and bought some food to last me until Sunday, the day I was scheduled to fly to Chicago.

However, I still didn't have the winter clothing I would need to go north so I kept praying to God to make a way. The recruiter sent me about a dozen forms to fill out regarding background checks, company polices, and a drug screen. The same day I got my state ID, I later went to take the drug test because I needed ID for that as well. This all happened on that Tuesday, and would have significance later. On the following Friday, I went to the library to use the computers but when I got there I had to wait. While waiting, I got the urge to go and check a section of the books that had to do with C# programming to see if they had anything I wanted. I didn't see anything I wanted so I started heading back to the area where I was sitting, moving

my head up and down as I continued to scan the books. This is an old habit I developed in college, which made it very hard for me to stay focused on my homework, and I am still not over it. Suddenly, a book caught my eye and I stopped dead in my tracks. It was a book that would definitely be of good use to me in Chicago so I grabbed it and headed for the checkout counter. Since my library card had all but disintegrated, I had been forced to get my library ID printed out on paper. The librarian asked for my ID and I said sure, reached for my wallet and flipped back the layer of the wallet concealing my wallet. Oh, hell! This was all I could say. My ID was nowhere to be found! I started hyperventilating, and sweating like I had been exercising. The librarian tried to calm me by telling me that she would still allow me to check the book out. I told her it's not the book I'm concerned about right now. It's my ID, which I would need to catch my flight to Chicago!

I had to stop and think, but I was finding it all too incredibly perilous and could not focus. My brain was scattering as I grabbed for every possibility I could think of that could explain what was happening to me. I started thinking that Satan had somehow picked my pocket and had taken my ID just so I would not be able to benefit from God's blessing. I thought of the possibility of someone reaching into my car while I was sleeping in the Kroger parking lot and lifting my wallet, taking my ID in the process, and placing it back into my back pocket. This was becoming insane for me, and I knew I had to get a grip on the situation if I expected to be able to focus and do some deductive reasoning. Suddenly, it hit me that I had needed to show my ID at the drug screen office. Surely I must have forgotten to get it back when I left. It was already about 5pm and I knew their office closed at 5:30 so I had to act fast. I called their office and asked if anyone had mentioned that I had left my ID. The staff person looked in all the places they would normally keep stuff like that but said she didn't see anything. I pleaded with her to look again and even tried explaining to her the significance of this situation in hopes to win her sympathy and make an extra effort to help me. However, she said they were now closing and that I would have to call the office on Monday to ask the person who waited on me if they had seen it.

My heart grew faint, and I finally acknowledged that I would have to take a different approach. I decided to contact the recruiter to give him a heads up on what my situation was. Out of desperation, I suggested to him that maybe the solution was to money gram me the cost of the state ID so I could purchase another one on Saturday if I got there before 12pm. In my mind, that was the only solution. However, he tried to calm me and in the process managed to break through my gloom and doom, shedding light on the situation from a different perspective. He reminded me that I had sent him a copy of my social security and my state ID after I had left the drug screen office! Suddenly, I was on cloud nine, and joyously told him I could handle it from there. However, I thought that I had made the copy at the library I was in at the moment, so I had the librarian to all look in their favorite places to keep stuff like that. Nothing! Then they

had me to go over to the reference desk to ask that librarian. Nothing! I began to perspire again, and lose my grip on the situation when suddenly, like a ray of light, I got a vision about being downtown. Yes, I was downtown when I made the photo copy of my social security card and my state ID! It was at the downtown public library, one the second floor, and I had paid 15 cents to have the copy made. I remembered it all, and I asked the librarian to call the 2nd floor and ask if anyone turned in my credentials. He asked me what the name was, and then repeated it back to the person on the other end of the phone. It was such a gratifying moment when I heard the librarian say that they did indeed have my credentials. The weight of a thousand cars were suddenly lifted from my shoulders, and I began to perk up, thanking God privately to myself, and asking him to forgive my unbelief in the same breath.

How could I ever doubt him after all I've seen him do in my life? This is the nature of the human condition and is mostly what separates us from God's blessings – our unbelief! God had mercy on me for some reason but I will always know that it was not because of anything I had done. Well, maybe it was the witnessing, but then scripture says that it is our reasonable service. I own him at least that much just to breathe air. Well, I was back on top of the world and everything was back to normal, at least I was back to square one. Now I was beginning to think that there were forces that didn't want me to transition into my new environment without substantial resistance. I was at the point to where I was going to have to go to Chicago ill-prepared for the weather. My first priority was to get there and deal with whatever after that. I called on a dear friend of mine whom I had known since I was 9 years old. She was had actually been my mother's good friend, and I had been friends with her sons since then. I told her my situation and asked her if I could come over to wash my clothes. She said yes, as I knew she would so I made plans to go over there the next morning, which was Saturday. When I got there and started putting my clothes in the washer she said the strangest thing. She said that she didn't have all my money for this month but she had the rest of it. I was strangely puzzled, and asked her to repeat what she had said. She playfully gave me a curious look out of the side of her eye, smiled again, and said, you know. Still puzzled, and with wide eyes, I was like a deer with headlights in their eyes. She finally clued me in by saying, partially under her breathe, what it was she was talking about.

I finally got it, and was delighted that she had been so honest with me. I told her all she had to give me was \$100 but she said that she would not do that. She said she would give me all my money. Right then, she counted out to me \$300 on the counter. I was ecstatic, and decided to get one of her sons to take me to buy some winter clothing right away. I also decided not to wait until Sunday to go to the airport. I would go there immediately and wait there until Sunday because I didn't want to take any chances of missing that flight to Chicago. I could not believe my good fortune, and kept thanking God for what he was doing for me. It was all too good to be true! However, it had his hand all over it, and is just the way that he chooses to work his magic.

He is in the miracle working business and in order for his miracles to have the impact and the effect that he desires, he needs to place us in situations where we are at our wits end, and can see no other way out of our situation except God perform a miracle by making a way out of no way! Well, this tale is not over yet. When I went to check my 2 bags on Sunday for my flight, I found out that I had to pay \$25 for the first one and \$35 for the second one, for a total of \$60. If that lady had not given me that money I would have had to fly to Chicago without any luggage except what I could carry onto the plane. God indeed had foreseen this very situation even while I was thinking that my situation was so dismal. Well, I made it up here to Chicago and my job is going great. Actually, everything is great! God is so good, and I don't think I could ever forget what he's done for me then, and in the past. I'm sure there will be more opportunities for me to witness God's hand in my life, and personally, I look forward to it. It is so awe-inspiring! To God be all the glory!