



SEPTEMBER 2023



*The Faith Based Solution to the  
Addiction Epidemic*



My name is Michael and I'm 31 years old. I had a good childhood. I was raised by my father, stepmother and grandparents. My mother wasn't really around when I was growing up due to her crack-cocaine addiction. My grandfather was my best friend. He went to all of my sports events and I spent any extra time outside of school and sports with him.

When I went to high school, I started drinking and smoking weed. I felt like I always had it under control, but little did I know it would open up a door to a world of hurt and darkness. After hurting my shoulders at wrestling practice, I went to the doctor who prescribed a bottle of pain killers (opioids). I don't know what it was about them, but I fell in love with them. I started using them more, all the while keeping it from my family—or so I thought.

I started realizing what opioids were doing to me and the person I was becoming. I was doing things I wasn't raised to do like lying, stealing and hurting my family. So I stopped using opioids and cleaned myself up a little. Then the worse thing I've ever had to deal with happened. My grandparents got into a car wreck and my grandfather passed away. I fell into the darkest place I've ever been. I stopped caring about anything. I started using again, but this time pills weren't enough. I started using heroin, which turned into an every day thing for about 8 years. During this time, I lost everything and pushed away people who loved me. I hurt my family and loved ones over and over again. I went to jail and prison multiple times for stealing and drug charges.

It took my mom finding God and getting clean to get my attention. Also, my best friend had come to Men's Challenge of the Smokies. I saw the fruit of what God had done in his life. I was at my rock bottom and God opened the door for me to come to Men's Challenge of the Smokies.

Since coming here, I'm learning to trust God and his plan for my life. Being a Christian is honestly the hardest thing I've ever done in life. It has been a daily struggle for me, but for the first time in my life, I've experienced true happiness, peace and joy. It all comes from God and I owe Him all the praise. I'm thankful my family prayed and never gave up on me. I'm thankful my best friend was there for me and I'm thankful for Men's Challenge of the Smokies who helped open my eyes and find God.

My favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

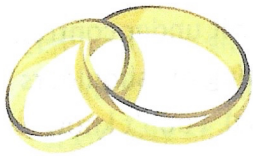
Hello  
September!



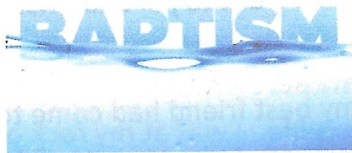
## CONGRATULATIONS BRANDON



Congratulations to Brandon on his completing the program at Men's Challenge of the Smokies in August. Brandon will be living in graduate housing here on campus and working locally.



We want to congratulate two of our staff members who recently got married. Pictured above *L to R* - Nick and Emilee, Justin and Sondra.



2 more baptized! Praise the Lord! II Cor 5:7



### TO MAKE A DONATION:

P.O. BOX 2157, Franklin, NC 28744 /OR GIVE ONLINE at our website: [www.livinghopeway.com](http://www.livinghopeway.com)

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT US AT: 828-524-2157/Thrift Store: 828-586-9966

Like us on Facebook "Men's Challenge of the Smokies" and share our page