

DECEMBER
2024

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

MEN'S
CHALLENGE
CONNECTION



I left all my tears of pain, grief and sorrow at the alter and finally surrendered to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Salutations,

May God bless you with peace, love and joy. My name is Justin. I am from a small farming community called Nakina, NC. I was blessed with an upbringing of a southern, country lifestyle by two amazing and God fearing parents. I was raised going to church every time the doors were opened, every revival and helping out with any needs of the church and community. My childhood and adolescent life had a God centered lifestyle. After the completion of my academics, I joined the United States Air Force. During my enlistment, I sustained a traumatic brain injury and was medically retired. After my retirement, I settled back in my hometown. I worked a fulltime job, went to college and became a volunteer firefighter. I began that stereotypical hardworking American dream that God blessed me with. However, when I put God out of my life, I became a prodigal son and squandered everything.

I battled addiction for fourteen years. It caused a numbing affect as a derivative from opioids and stimulants. Drugs numbed my physical and emotional pains, shame, grief, regrets and many traumatizing situations. These situations calloused my heart so hard that I hated, cursed and blamed God. I asked why so many times, however, I never let God respond and ignored Him due to anger. Not hearing my daughter's voice in fourteen years, my nephew diagnosed with leukemia at a really young age, death of two children in the womb, divorce and families torn apart, innocent children dying in wrecks or freak accidents, and so many friends dying in multiple forms of violence are just a few situations that sparked an anger that caused me to be a rebel toward Christ.

Struggles with addiction are inevitable. It starts off as a depletion of funds, possessions, homes and leads to homelessness and legal issues. It secretly destroys your relationships with family and friends, marriages, your physical and mental health, but most importantly your spiritual life. The rock-in-roll lifestyle created the absolute monster I had become. I was filled with anger, hate, selfishness, pride and sin.

Twelve times I sought recovery from the secular side, but it never worked. I was taught the physiological and psychological side of healing, however, the most important wasn't offered; the spiritual healing aspect. This is what was missing in my recovery. Men's Challenge is my first spiritual based recovery and discipleship program. I found out about this program from a friend and alumni of this program. Through his obedience to God, he planted a seed two and a half years ago. All I can say is *thank you*.

With intense prayer from my family, myself crying out from the grave, it was ultimately God showing His mercy, grace and love toward me. After this act of love, I strayed away, however, God gave me a final reminder to pay my vow. I arrived at Men's Challenge on January 16th and two days later on January 18th, I left all my tears of pain, grief and sorrow at the alter and I finally surrendered to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ. I arose from that alter with peace, love and joy beyond any understanding. On February 19th, I buried my old self and rose in my new spirit.

Men's Challenge will always have a special place in my heart. God has used this place as a season of healing, restoration and transformation. I have restoration of family and friends, my spiritual, my physical and my mental health. I have gained another family of brotherhood of disciples that I will never forget. All the days of my life, I will seek the Lord. He gave me a second chance and chose a sinner like me. He gifted me with an inheritance to His glorious land, for Jesus Christ bought me with his nail scarred hands.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Proverbs 9:10



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MEN'S CHALLENGE HAPPENINGS



Congratulations to Robert on his graduation in November.



Congratulations to John on his graduation in November.



Rejoicing for one more soul born again and baptized in water.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5:17

Congratulations Mark!

Thankful for the recent opportunities to share testimonies and worship with these wonderful congregations.



Mashburn Branch Baptist



Iotla Methodist



Higdonville Baptist

Save the Date



**Our next graduation:
Saturday, December 21st 10am
336 Living Hope Way
Reception immediately following
Everyone is invited to attend**



If you or your church plan to buy Christmas gifts for the men, please contact the office at 828-524-2157 for an approved list. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

TO MAKE A DONATION:

PO Box 2157, Franklin, NC 28744 or ONLINE at our website: www.livinghopeway.com

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



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