



God broke me down to nothing so I would have to say yes.

My name is John. Growing up for me was pretty rough. I was born to two parents in deep addiction. Due to that, life was pretty unstable. Me and my brothers were moved around a lot from place to place. When I was in the first grade, we were put into the foster care system, where we again bounced around from household to group homes. After roughly two years, my mom was able to get us back but unfortunately was still battling addiction herself, so we were eventually handed over to our grandparents. About a week into that, my grandpa had an unexpected heart attack and died. This led my grandma to blame us in a lot of ways and take her anger and abuse out on me and my brothers for the remainder of our childhood in various forms of mental, verbal and in some cases, physical abuse. Going through all of this started making me want to escape reality at any cost, so I started by trying pot. After that, a friend offered me his Adderall that his parents gave him every morning because he didn't like taking them. That was the real beginning of my love affair with drugs. Really anything that was ever offered to me, I was willing to try just to escape my reality. At the age of seventeen, I moved out of my grandma's house and ended up graduating high school. After school, I stayed away from most all drugs except pot. In the midst of that, the Lord started blessing me tremendously. I started climbing up the ladder at my job I had taken after high school and eventually to a job as a store manager of a big phone company. Then the Lord blessed me even more by bringing a loving, caring, God-fearing woman in my life. All this time I didn't see how much he was blessing me, instead I started feeling the stress of performing at a management level in a sales environment. That's when drugs came back into my life. A happenstance meeting that happened one night after closing my store led to me using cocaine, which led to using methamphetamine. Simultaneously, while I dove headfirst into a horrible addiction, I married my wife. I was living a double life that she knew nothing about. Even through that, I continued to get blessed by becoming a stepdad to two great kids and having a daughter born in 2020. During those years, I maintained control for the most part going months at a time without using, but eventually it caught up with me. My wife found out about my addiction and after trying to get me help, to no avail, she was left with nothing to do but kick me out. I was at one of the lowest points in my life. After being on cocaine for four days and not sleeping during that time, I made some bad choices that landed me in jail. During that time in jail, my mom, who at this point in her life was saved and recovered from her life of addiction, was praying and working on my behalf to get me into Men's Challenge. I didn't want to come, but God broke me down to nothing so I would have to say yes. I'm so glad he did. Since I've been here, I've rededicated my life to the Lord. Not just because it's a part of the program but because there is a burning desire in me to please my savior. Thanks to my God, my mom and Men's Challenge, I have new hope found in Jesus Christ and I'm learning what it is to be a man of God.

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Luke 17:33



Scan to follow us on Facebook

MEN'S CHALLENGE HAPPENINGS



From the desk of Mike Barres

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

This is my life verse. Very near and dear to my heart. Years ago, I heard a preacher named Peter Lord say, "The main thing, is to keep the main thing, the main thing." Jesus is my Lord and I desire to seek His Kingdom above all else. I want to always say, "not my will but His be done." I want to see His kingdom work and see how I am a part of that.

In this new season of retirement, that I will be entering soon, will look different, but it will always be in my heart and in my mind. I want to represent Him well and be a blessing and a witness wherever I go. It has been, and always will be, a pleasure to serve Him and do His will.

I also want to say a great big thanks to the Lord for the last part of that verse as well. He has always taken care of us and blessed us in more ways that I could count. When we put Him first, He takes care of us. He not only meets our needs but like it says in Ephesians 3:20, 21 He really blesses us too. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."



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

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

SAVE THE DATE

August 17th @10am

**Men's Challenge
Graduation**

**Mike Barres' Retirement
Ceremony**

*336 Living Hope Way
Refreshments will be served
All are invited to attend*



Hunter's Mountain Ride

Rev up those engines! It's time to enjoy a ride through God's country for a GREAT cause. On October 5, 2024, we are riding the roads that Hunter Curtis loved to ride. All proceeds raised from this event will be donated to Men's Challenge of the Smokies to assist individuals who are attending the program. You can request an event form by emailing huntersmtnride@gmail.com.

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



Follow us @menschallengeofthesmokies #menschallengeofthesmokies

