



Aaron

## CONTROLLED BY ALCOHOL

I'm 38 years old and from west Michigan. I'm the oldest of three children. As a child, I grew up going to church every Sunday and attending youth group every Wednesday. My parents were very involved in serving the church. At one point, both were Sunday School teachers. Mom was a youth leader and Dad served as a deacon for many years.

At 13, I accepted Jesus Christ into my life as my personal savior on a backpacking trip with a youth group in Colorado. During the transition from Middle School to High School, the devil got a foothold on the group of kids I hung around with from the youth group. Soon there was alcohol and drug use among myself and my friends. Alcohol became my medicine and my healer, replacing the place where Jesus had been in my life. During this time, something happened between my parents and they divorced. I was devastated. Satan used this to totally control me with alcohol and my life spiraled out of control.

For the next 18 years, God tried to get my attention. There were times I'd start going to church again, fellowshiping with other Christians and even serving as a youth leader. But I'd always fall back out of God's will and back into the bondage of Satan. Over these years Satan, through alcohol, has taken jobs, homes, my freedom, a marriage and countless other things from me. The one thing Satan was focused on was stealing my relationship with God. Finally at the end of 2015, I came to a point where I couldn't meet my own needs and I went to West Michigan Teen Challenge. I was there for 11 1/2 months and left. The devil had me once again. My relationship with God suffered severely. Almost immediately, I fell back into drinking. In 14 months my health had deteriorated greatly and I had no where to turn.

Last winter while living in a sober living house I felt an urge to get my life and relationship right with God. This urge was the Holy Spirit trying to guide me. I listened to the call of the Holy Spirit and He led me to Teen Challenge of the Smokies. Since being here my health has improved greatly. My relationships with family and my Pastor has never been better. God has always been there by my side just waiting for me to walk with Him in obedience. On August 24, I was baptized in the Cullasaja River. This was a rededication of my life to Jesus Christ and His calling on my life. Romans 6:6-8 says, "We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him." Through the faith God has given me, I feel the freedom to enjoy life with Him in control. I'm excited to live out the rest of my years free from bondage and to live a life serving and furthering God's kingdom.





Congratulations to Michael and Cole for completing the program here at Men's Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men's Center. We appreciate all who came out to support them and those who helped with the reception.



**Our next graduation will be March 16, 2019 at 2:00pm .**



Please join us as we celebrate the graduation of Aaron and Zack.



Josh, Aaron and John working in the woodshop



Brandon's baptism in February

*Mike and Betty Barros*



**NEEDS: 2** dehumidifiers, gutters (\$2500), cafeteria flooring (\$3500), central air downstairs (\$7200). Contact us if you would like to help towards these projects.

**TO MAKE A DONATION:**

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