

## **Celebrate Recovery Testimony of Craig P.**

Hi, I'm Craig and I believe in God the Father, His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit which is the Trinity and the Holy Bible as the Word of God. I also believe in The Old Roman Creed, predecessor of The Apostle's Creed, which is a Statement of Faith.



### **The Old Roman Creed (The Apostles wrote after Pentecost)**

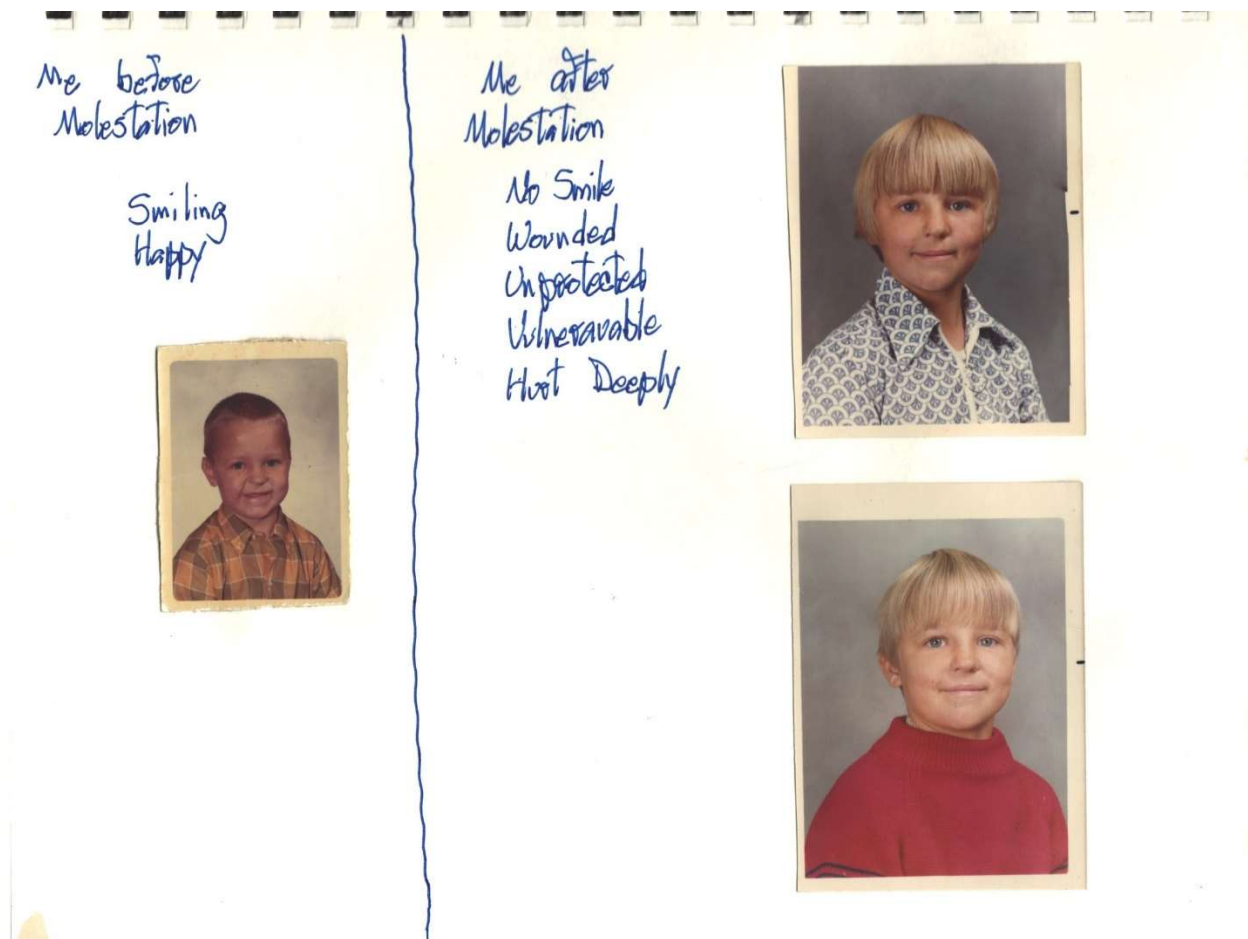
I believe in God the Father Almighty;  
and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our LORD,  
who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried,  
on the third day rose again from the dead,  
ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father,  
whence He will come to judge the living and the dead;  
and in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Church,  
the remission of sins,  
the resurrection of the flesh,  
life everlasting.

I am a sinner, saved by God's Grace and a Grateful Recovering Alcoholic and my name is Craig.

I was born in Omaha, Nebraska in October in 1962 as a medical miracle. My parents tried 8 agonizing years to have children, so, they adopted my older Sister and older Brother. 4 years later, I was conceived which was a shock to everyone, even the doctors. My 7 year older Sister and 5 year older Brother felt my parents would abandon them in favor of their natural born children. I was told that they ran away from home because they felt they were no longer loved.

So, this resulted in my parents over-compensating my adopted older Sister and Brother and would spoil them with attention and physical things. After my younger Sister was born, we moved to the Colorado Front Range where I was raised. While growing up, I remember feeling emotionally abandoned, lonely, not equally loved and my self-esteem was very low.

I was molested at 8 and 10 years old. I look at school pictures of myself before this and I was a smiling little boy. After the molestation, no smiles and I look vulnerable and wounded.



I stuffed these hurts and thought they were normal "sexual explorations".

My 7-year older Sister would take me and my younger Sister to movies, amusement parks and do fun things together. She would tell us that she was our true Mother. So, I loved my older Sister very much. However, I believe my older Sister had mental health issues. She would estrange herself from me and other members of our family at various times when she got mad. My older Sister was estranged from me at the time I married my wife and did not attend our wedding. My older Sister returned in relationship to me when our children were born and she had relationship with our children until 2009.

I always liked airplanes and started flying gliders before I could drive a car, at age 14. I earned my Private Pilot's License when I was 17. I knew I wanted to be a pilot for my career.

Our family attended churches sporadically, who spoke of Jesus, but not as a Savior. I was 15 years old and confirmed in the church fully believing that I was a Christian. In college, at 20 years old, I was introduced by my roommate and other Christian's to Jesus Christ as Savior and LORD. I remember praying a sinner's prayer of salvation and on that day my name was written in The Book of Life. After this, I heard the Holy Spirit telling me "Everything is different now" and it was! I attended Bible believing churches and studied the Holy Bible. I spoke to my relatives and friends about Jesus Christ as Savior. I was able to lead my Father in the sinners prayer to secure his eternal salvation. Some of my relatives including my older Sister rejected Jesus and became atheist's or pursued other cults and religions.

After college, I knew that something was wrong and began counseling. I discovered that the "sexual experimentation" at 8 and 10 years old was actually molestations. So, I worked on that

and gained healing. I met my wife at Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Aurora, Colorado. I told her of these molestations and my brokenness. She loved me and married me anyway. We have been married over 31 years.

My wife and I have 3 adult children and we raised them in a Christian home. Praise God, all of our children are Christians and following the Lord Jesus Christ! In our birthing years, we had 2 miscarriages. We grieved and buried our children at Mount Lindo cemetery which is located atop a Southwest Denver Mountain top with a lighted Cross that is seen from all over Denver. In my wedding band (Show Left Hand Rings), I have all my children's birthstone's and two diamonds for our miscarried babies. I did not tell my children about the molestations.

After decades of time to process and heal of these molestations, I was able to talk to my molester and tell him what happened when I was 8 years old. He didn't remember it and he apologized. I forgave him. We have a much closer relationship now. It feels so good to have so much healing from this childhood abuse.

In 2009, my older sister estranged herself from everyone in the immediate and extended family. She also legally changed her name and dropped our Peterson Family Name. I believe my older Sister had Bi-Polar disease because her Manic and Depressed times were extreme. When I suggested this to her, she rejected it. My Father and I were the only ones to reach out many times to restore relationship with her. I also sent her a box of gifts and letters from myself and my children. She wrote a letter and sent the box back rejecting us. I kept this box and the rejection. But, each time I was near her in Denver, I would knock on her door, left messages on

her door with my phone number. Her friend jotted down my phone number and later told me that she was on the other side of the door when I knocked and would not answer. I was hurt by the rejections and developed a resentment toward her.

My family and I were attending Pacific Islands Bible Church in Mililani, Hawaii and I became a Teaching Elder. The church Ordained me, which meant I could “Marry and Bury”. When my parents found this out, they asked me if I could officiate their funerals? I agreed and acknowledged that it would be hard, but, a great honor. In November 2010, I performed my Father’s funeral at First Covenant Church in Omaha; Nebraska; the church my Father built with his brothers in the 1950’s. At his funeral, I told everyone that my Dad was rocking my miscarried babies in heaven.



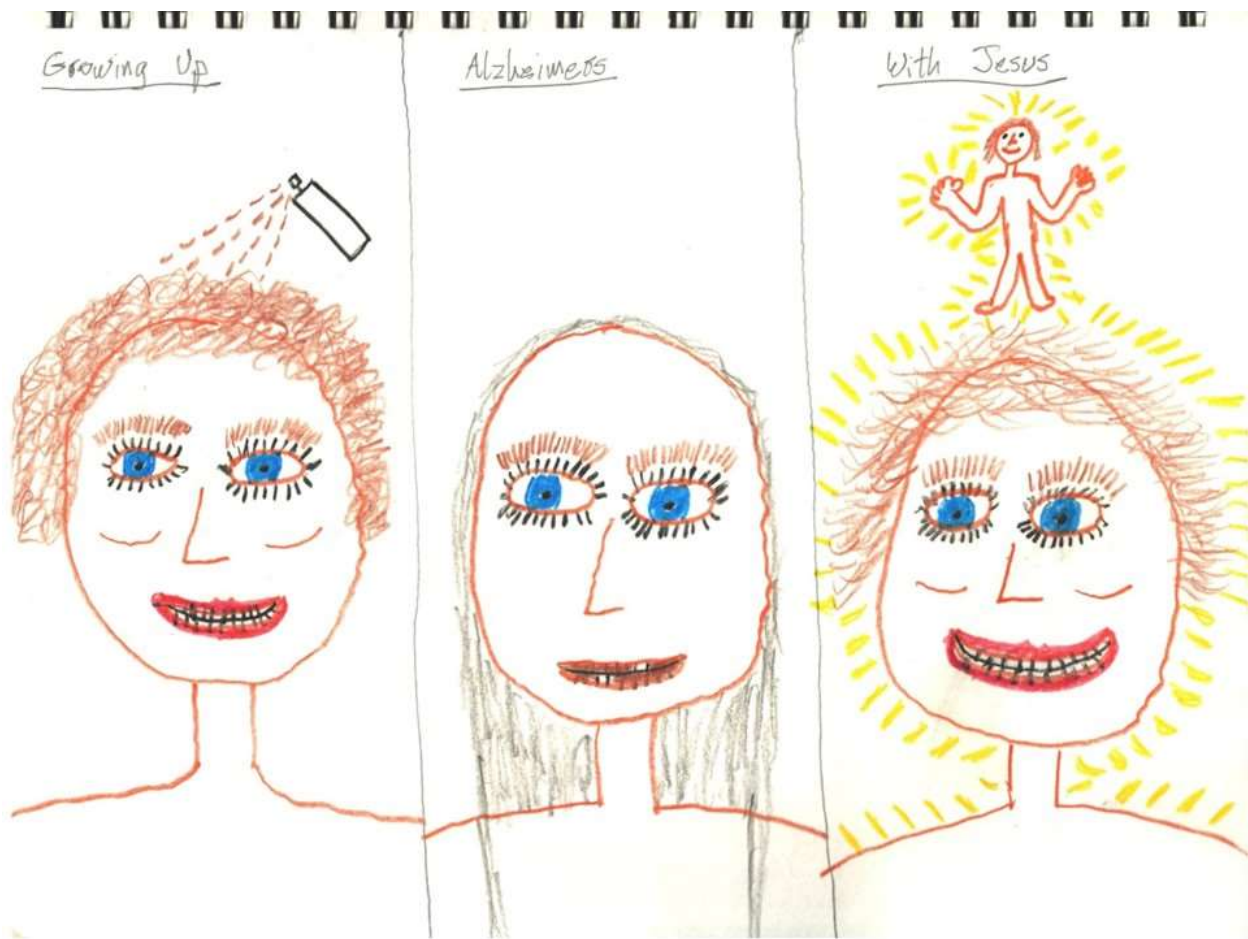
I do Art Therapy and drew this which is another healing for me. I realize that my Dad, my babies and other relatives are with Jesus! I had a normal grief process to mourn his death. I notified my older Sister of our Father's death and she did not attend his funeral.

In September 2018, I received a surprise phone call from my older Sister's friend. My older Sister had died of 4 cancers at a weight of 79 pounds. My siblings and I paid for her burial and I performed her funeral. I was the next-of-kin as she did not have a valid Will. I was also the only one in our family that kept trying to reconcile the relationship. Her condo was a mess and she had a large dog and cat to rehome. On her gravestone, I included the Peterson name with her legal name. In an invalid Will my older Sister wrote, she wanted to gift her condo to another

friend. I received no financial compensation from her estate. I developed a friendship with my older Sister's friends and we still communicate to this day. I felt very hurt and taken advantage of by my older Sister and didn't recognize it at the time that I was developing a resentment for her. I was a moderate drinker prior to this and I began drinking more alcohol. My blood pressure rose and had to take High Blood Pressure medication.

At 85 years old, my Mother beat Breast Cancer into remission but, had Alzheimer's. After being married to my Father for over 62 years, after my Father's death, she no longer cared for herself. This was a big shock for the family because growing up, my Mother would get her hair done every Friday at the beauty salon and the beautician would spray a whole can of hairspray on her hair!





Her hair would “bounce back” into perfect position even after a full nights sleep! I thought my Mother was beautiful! Now back to after Dad died, she would not let her hair or fingernails be cut, did not brush her teeth and they became brown and she lost some teeth. I saw her a month before she passed away and she was very different from the woman I remembered as a beautiful woman. My Mother died September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019. As I was traveling to Omaha to perform her funeral, I became very ill and went to the emergency room where they diagnosed a virus that must run it’s course. I was unable to do my Mother’s Funeral or see her body that my family said the mortician did an excellent job at making her look like before Alzheimer’s. I would curse and shame myself for being a horrible son who broke his promise to his own Mother. The last image I have of her was riddled with the disease of Alzheimer’s. When I would think of my



Mother, I would think of this last image of her. My alcohol consumption increased as my pain increased. It is only recently, that I realized my Mother is with Jesus now and she is more beautiful now that she ever was on earth! This is the image of my Mother that I have now!

In a 2 year period, I lost my older Sister, my Mother, my fellow pilot Uncle who would loan me his airplane to build my flying hours for my pilot career, and 2 cousins.



## 5 deaths in a 2 year period

- 1) My Sister died in early 60's of 4 cancers at 79 lbs. She was estranged from the whole family for 9 years and who rejected all my efforts for reconciliation. I was next of kin and the only one willing to bury her and complete her estate.
- 2) Fellow pilot Uncle died of Alzheimer's. He previously loaned my his airplane to build my flying hours for a airline career.
- 3) Mother died with Alzheimer's, unable to do her funeral due to a virus illness.
- 4) Cousin in early 60's died of Pancreatic Cancer 6 months after diagnosis.
- 5) Cousin in late 60's died quickly of a Brain Aneurism. No chance to say goodbye.

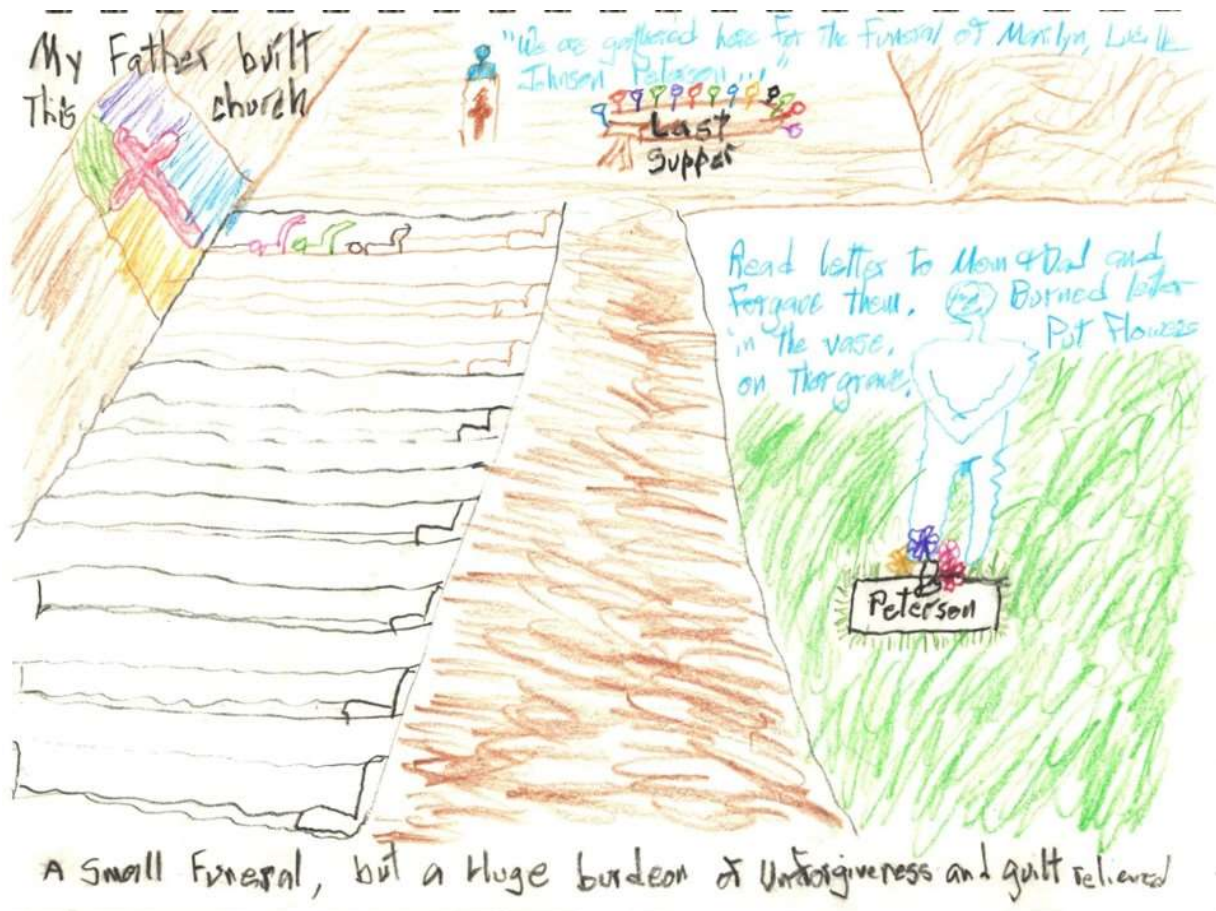
After my last cousin's death, my wife caught me drinking hard liquor at 7am. A total of 5 deaths in 2 years which broke my heart preventing me from normally processing grief.

Alcohol was slow and insidious for me. I would “stuff my feelings until they bubbled up in alcohol”. Alcohol would say to me “I’ll help you forget your problems and make you feel good!” I really didn’t know I was medicating my pain. I thought I could always stop drinking. I would power through 2 weeks of not drinking, telling myself “I don’t have a problem.” I am an airline pilot and have flown aircraft for the past 43 years. I bought a breathalyzer [\[Show Breathalyzer\]](#) and would time my drinking so that I would blow 0.00 Blood Alcohol Content before flying or driving. A fellow pilot who is a recovering alcoholic could see I was addicted, but, I would tell him I don’t have a problem and I used a breathalyzer. He said he never knew anybody who used a breathalyzer when drinking. My drinking started slow from beer to wine to the hard stuff because “Liquor is Quicker”. I always thought I was a “Happy Drunk”, but really, I was a “Mean Drunk”. I hate it that I verbally hurt my wife and my children. They all knew that I had a problem. Trust was shaken. I would Black Out and not remember things I had done. One time, I texted my wife at 02:30 in the morning that I didn’t remember.

It was March 17, 2022, Saint Patrick’s Day and coincidentally my Father’s Birthdate. I boozed it up! I went to bed, but couldn’t sleep. I was shaking so badly [\[Shake water bottle\]](#) that I spilled all the water out of my glass to take a sleeping pill. By the time my wife awoke at 7:00am, I told her I was an Alcoholic and to take me to the emergency room. My blood pressure was 195/155 and the doctor was very concerned that I would stroke. It took all day, but, got me stabilized and I entered Detox for 5 days. I was learning what being an Alcoholic meant. I started journaling and drawing art. With only crayons available, I drew a timeline of my life to record how I got to where I was [\[Show Crayon Timeline\]](#). My roommate was also an addicted Pastor! This was God working! After I was released from Detox, I notified my Federal Aviation Administration

(FAA) Doctor that I was Alcoholic and getting treatment. So, I voluntarily surrendered my Medical Certificate that I need to fly. This is a big deal for me because I love to fly and wanted to be a pilot since a small child. Recovering Alcoholic Pilots must undergo lengthy and thorough inpatient, outpatient treatment, intensive counseling, Neuro and Psychological testing, meetings with signed Verification sheets [\[Show Meeting Verification sheet\]](#), Progress Reports by my Sponsor and Celebrate Recovery Leaders, and twice daily SoberLink breathalyzer [\[Show SoberLink\]](#) tests emailed to my FAA Doctor. I am required to do this to earn my Medical Certificate back so I can return to flying. I am successfully meeting all my requirements. I expect to be flying again in the Spring of 2024.

I learned a lot when I was in treatment and I want to share this with you, my fellow Celebrate Recovery Brothers and Sisters. I went for 30 days of Inpatient Rehabilitation in Knoxville, Tennessee specifically for pilots and other transportation workers. This was great to be with other pilots who have the same problem as me. After several weeks of abstaining from alcohol, my blood pressure decreased to 107/80 and I was taken off High Blood Pressure medication. I started doing the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Steps. Each time I spoke of my Mother I would cry and weep. I was asked what caused me to drink alcohol to excess and that is when it hit me: Shame, Guilt, Broken Promise and Unforgiveness to not do my Mother's Funeral. Then, a counselor asked me if I ever thought about doing a Mock Funeral for my Mother.



What a great idea! I called the Pastor of First Covenant Church in Omaha and told him my whole story. He graciously opened the church for me to do a funeral for my Mother. In attendance was my wife and 2 cousins in this large church that my Father had built with his own hands. I performed the funeral I had prepared many years before. I also read a forgiveness letter to my parents over their graves and burned the letter in the headstone vase. I placed flowers in the vase to honor my parents. A huge weight fell off of me! I fulfilled my promise to my Mother! I was able to drop the guilt & shame and forgive myself! My desire for alcohol was greatly reduced as well.

The next step was physically releasing resentment! My counselor took us on a stroll around a lake and he said to pick up a stick or rock and have it represent a resentment. I picked up a stick

and it represented resentment for my older Sister. I threw the stick in the lake and physically got rid of my resentment! This was very emotional for me and so worthwhile to physically release it. I'm still working on my resentments and I have instituted doing something physical when I release it. You can do this too! Try it!

After 30 days of Inpatient Rehab in Tennessee, I came home to my apprehensive wife, determined to show her how God has changed me and to start rebuilding my wife's trust...knowing this takes time. I wrote long letters to her and my children apologizing and asking for forgiveness. I also told my children of my childhood molestations and the healing I have received. They all forgave me and I think our family ties are stronger. I know this is not for everyone, but I choose to share my Recovering Alcoholic Story with my family, my wife's large family and friends. I have gotten only positive feedback from them and they pray for me. It is very nice to know I have support from them. Instead of hiding my hurts, I share them. This helps me to "Be Real" and operate from a healthy standpoint.

Another thing I've learned from treatment and being on this journey is the lethality of Chemical Addiction! I've known several people who have died of this addiction. This has been a shock to my wife and myself as we never experienced this before. I believe that I would be dead now if I didn't admit I was an Alcoholic and get help. I credit this to everyone on the path God has led me and especially to Celebrate Recovery! One of my favorite Bible verses is Proverbs 3:4-5 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." When I trust God, He leads me! I don't have to worry and fret. God led me to Celebrate Recovery and that is the best

recovery program for me! Beginning our meetings with worshipping our higher power, Jesus Christ, saying the 12 Steps and 8 Principles with biblical references, learning from lessons and testimonies, sharing in a safe anonymous group which encourages processing my recovery.

After I returned home from Rehab, a FAA requirement was to attend 90 meetings in 90 days, being everyday. So, in May 2022, I started attending Alcoholics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery meetings in the Treasure Valley of Idaho. I also attend Grant Us the Serenity AA and CR Zoom meetings. Although I am not required to do so, I still attend a meeting everyday.

I continue to do Celebrate Recovery 12 Step Studies. Committing to a Celebrate Recovery Step Study is a significant growth step in my recovery. Some call it the “Meat & Potato’s” of Celebrate Recovery. What you invest in these diligent steps will yield powerful healing, growth and purpose of your recovery. God honors and blesses all your work in recovery! I love it that I am part of the Celebrate Recovery “Forever Family” and my Step Study Brothers are closer than any relative. I particularly liked Step 7 “We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.” Currently, I co-lead a 12 Step Study at Vineyard Boise Christian Fellowship and doing The Journey Continues, books 5-8 12 Step Study at Tree City. God is doing this in my life and I am very thankful! All you have to do is let God work in your life! I have a Sponsor and Sponsee’s, Accountability Partners to help me on this walk of recovery. So, this is why I am a “Grateful Recovering Alcoholic”.

I’ve added some tools to my toolbox. To daily aid me in my recovery, I made a Daily Pocket Card with my accumulated Days of Sobriety that I fill out [\[Show Daily Pocket Card\]](#). Today, I

have \_\_\_\_ Days of Sobriety! I'm Celebrating another day of Recovery! I pray daily from the card, "Lord, help me to stay sober today. Today, not my will, but thine be done." I also check off that I go to a meeting and avoid trigger people/places/things. At the end of the day, I do a Step 10 "We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it" review of the day and list what I am grateful for the day. I keep these cards in a box as a record and review of my daily recovery.

In my pocket, I carry a business card [\[Show Business Card\]](#) with my cellphone number, meetings I attend, personal recovery website and The Old Roman Creed which is a statement of faith. I give this to anyone I can encourage.

You've seen my art and I love art therapy [\[Show Art Book\]](#) because it helps me to express my healing and recovery. You can do this too! On the handout [\[Show Handout\]](#), there is a little exercise to get you started. Using your dominate hand, draw a Hurt that you have. With your non-dominate hand, draw your feelings. This works really well with anger! Be sure and draw pictures of how God has provided healing too! See how God will use this art to express your hurts and feelings plus the healing too!



I love CR Chip Night because I get to add it to my chain of Dog Tags [\[Show Dog Tags\]](#).



Each chip is very important to me and reminds me of my recovery and all the work and time that I have dedicated to it. As my chain of Dog Tags clank throughout the day reminds me to Celebrate my Recovery!

I made a CR Signet Ring [\[Show Right Hand\]](#) to remind me who's I am, Jesus Christ – The King of Kings and LORD of Lords!



Also, like it say's in Ephesians 1:13-14 I am sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

I've also made a personal recovery website: [CraigPGratefulRecoveringAlcoholic.com](http://CraigPGratefulRecoveringAlcoholic.com) with my beliefs, information about Celebrate Recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous, my tools, recovery video's, art therapy, recovery jewelry and chips (my dog tags).

<https://CraigPGratefulRecoveringAlcoholic.Com>

HOME PAGE 2



I'M CRAIG P

a believer in the Trinity, the  
Apostle's Creed/Old Roman  
Creed and a grateful  
recovering alcoholic!

THE OLD ROMAN CREED WRITTEN PRIOR TO THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our  
LORD who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary who under

My beliefs, information about Celebrate Recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous, my tools, recovery video's, art therapy, recovery jewelry and chips (my dog tags).

Recently, I was going through some boxes and I found the box that my older Sister returned with her rejection. I threw the box away in the trash where it belonged. I no longer need to "hold on to" her rejection! This is another great point of healing. That I can release the resentment. Remember, I said it helps to physically get rid of a resentment!



In Lesson 17, FORGIVENESS, speaks of freedom after forgiving. So, I drew this out.



My hurts that became resentments, anger and rejection enslaved me. Balls & chains on my head/mind and body. When I forgive and release these resentments, I am freed from the balls & chains and released from prison!

We all have hurts, hangups & habits and Celebrate Recovery has helped me immensely and can help you too! Just keep coming back!

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony with you! I hope you are encouraged!