

I was the baby - 3 brothers & 3 sisters - in a small Iowa town. My Dad was a railroader and my Mom was a bookkeeper.

In High School, I “discovered” girls, booze, and drugs. In my senior year, I was arrested for possession of marijuana, for which the Judge made me choose – either Jail or the Army. I chose the Army.

While in Army, during two tours in Viet Nam, I developed a raging drug addiction. When I came back to the USA, I just didn't fit in. My experiences were so different from everyone I knew. I went to war while they grew up and got married.

After two failed marriages, three years in the State Pen, and numerous County Jail lock-ups, I just couldn't take any more.

I surrendered.

**It was like this: I said (finally),
“HERE I AM GOD.**

**YOU TALK AND I'LL LISTEN.”
I'd “heard” Him before, but I'd never really listened. I just couldn't do it my way any longer. My way didn't work. It was a decision I tried to avoid, but it was the best decision I ever made.**

Today, I am no longer serving drugs & alcohol.

My children (13 of them), have come to like me, and yes, even love me.

I'm no longer the drunk in the house. It didn't all happen “overnight.” In fact, it took a while. But now, I've been sober since 2001...listening to and serving my Lord Jesus Christ.

I still have “ups & downs,” however God has faithfully been there, all the time, to guide me and strengthen me.

I can actually remember what I did last night. I did not intentionally hurt anyone or insult anyone. Seven years ago, I could not have said this.

I also know that without Jesus Christ in my life, I could (probably would) be locked up. I'm so glad to be done with the “revolving door” of the Jailhouse.

Today, I pray for all those in Jail & Prison, that they don't wait as long as I did to accept God's free gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus Christ.

**ABSOLUTE SURRENDER
is what it takes.**

There's no magic words, no magic Bible dust to sprinkle on you.

There is work involved and sometimes, it ain't easy. But it sure beats Jail, Prison, or death.

Jesus said, "The time has come! The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Gospel!" (Mark 1:15)

Repent means to turn away from the sinful ways of the world, and continue turning away – for the rest of your life !

**Turn FROM your sins.
Turn TO Jesus Christ!**

To believe the Gospel is to put your faith in the GOOD NEWS that

"...Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day..." (1st Corinthians 15:3-4)

When you trust Christ, God puts your sin ON Jesus and puts Jesus' righteousness ON you.

"For God made Christ, Who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." (2nd Corinthians 5:21)

Becoming a Christian is incredible! In fact, it's becoming a whole new person! It's like getting a new start on life!

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When you're right with God, He adopts you into the family of God.

"...He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe on His name." (John 1:12)

We begin our journey into our new life in Christ with the first step:

There is no magic prayer, no special words. After all, you're only responding to what Jesus has already done!

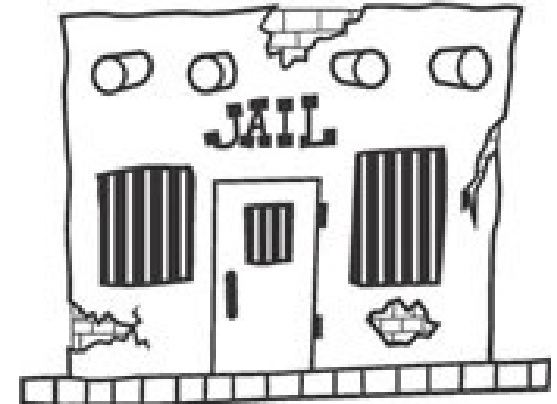
- ♥ **Thank Jesus for dying for your sins,**
- ♥ **Declare that you're turning from your sin and turning to Him,**
- ♥ **Thank Jesus for rising from the dead so you can have a new life, and**
- ♥ **Believe on Jesus, trust Jesus, and receive Him into your life and be your Lord (your Master) and your Savior.**

If you do these things from a sincere heart, I know God will honor your sincerity. The only thing you'll regret about it is that you didn't respond to Christ sooner!

**This is the true story of Joe Darnell, the Resident Manager at the Panhandle Rescue Ministries
P.O. Box 326
Gordon, Nebraska 69343.**

Joe will welcome your letter. Please don't ask him for money or stamps. He can't do that, but he can be your encouraging friend.

From



to



Joe's Journey