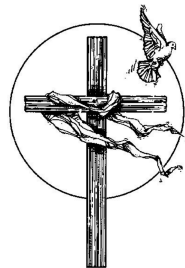


weeks later a new friend from my parent's church called and asked me, "Did you get the job?" "No," I replied, "I've only put in the one application." Five minutes later the phone rang. It was the housekeeping supervisor from Group Health. "If you come in tonight, the job is yours." I went straight in! To my shock they had hired me to clean two areas, the emergency rooms and the pharmacy. This is like putting an alcoholic in a liquor store after hours! I could have certainly cleaned up in there! The fellow I was replacing had been arrested for climbing into the pharmacy at night through the false ceiling and over the wall where he had stolen a 1,000 tablet jar of Valium. Every night when I went in to the pharmacy I could recognize many of the pills dropped on the floor which I had to vacuum up. Just a few months before I would have later dug through the dust in the vacuum looking for those pills. During this time I kept asking God, "How can you put me of all places in the pharmacy; you promised that you wouldn't give us stones or snakes when we've asked for bread. I won't survive in here; I know I'm going to fall." One evening when I was in the back room of the pharmacy, vacuuming right by the safe that held all the narcotics, the room was suddenly filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit and an overwhelming sense of confidence came over me that it wasn't going to be up to me but up to Him to keep me free and safe. I heard in my spirit, "Philippians 1:6." I hadn't read that verse in years, so on break I looked it up in a pocket Bible I had brought with me: "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you shall bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus!" That has been my only confidence since!

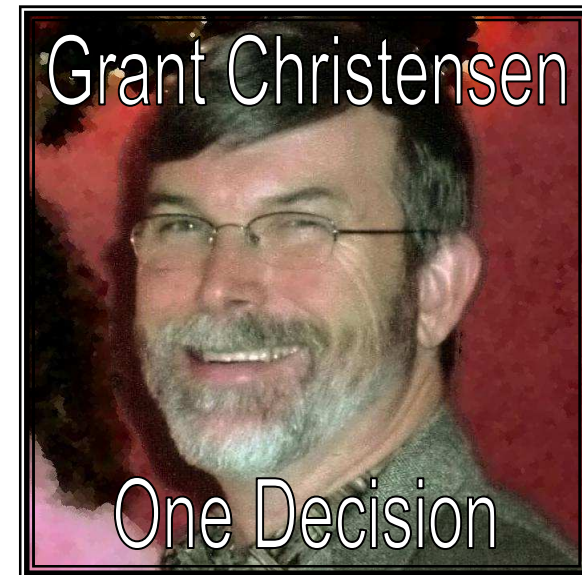
Since those days, God has called me to be a pastor, given me a most wonderful wife and two wonderful daughters. He has given me a congregation of people to dearly love--many of whom have been as broken as me. In the end I have nothing good in my life which isn't from His hand. I know that every part of my life comes from Him. I live in the house of God's extravagant and unconditional love with the solid floor of His powerful grace beneath my feet! I live in Him and He in me! Indeed, one decision can change your life forever!



The Good News

Jesus deeply loves you! In fact, He loves you so much that he would rather die than live without you! And that is exactly what He did for you! He loves you so much that He wants you to spend eternity with him! He offers you eternal life, the sure hope of being with Him forever! Yet, eternal life is so much more than just unending days of living forever; it is also the quality of life that Jesus describes as abundant life—life lived out in God's boundless love—and you can have that LIFE now! God offers you this eternal life as a *free* gift. We are told in Romans, "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 6:23)." How are we instructed to receive this free gift? In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him* (John 3:16-17)." We are to believe two primary things: first, that Jesus is uniquely God's Son—the One through whom all things were created—and therefore has the ability to save us; and second, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the One who came to save us from our sins. We have lived in rebellion and selfishness; Jesus came to take all of our rebellion and selfishness—our sin—upon Himself. The just punishment that should have fallen on us—death—Jesus took upon Himself. When Jesus died on the cross, all of our sin, rebellion and selfish acts died with Him. "*God made Jesus who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Corinthians 5:21)." After three days in the grave, Jesus was resurrected from the dead in order that *you* might live with Him forever. God offers you the free gift of eternal life today by inviting you simply to believe what He has said about His Son, Jesus. Jesus said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life* (John 5:24)." God offers you the free gift of eternal life because of how deeply and extravagantly He loves you! He invites you to entrust your life into His hands that He might forgive and save you and give you eternal life! Will you believe Him today?

To learn more, please begin by reading the Gospel of John!



One decision can change your life forever. In 1978 after graduating from high school and after working through the summer pulling green chain, I made the decision to join a fraternity at the University of Washington in Seattle. I had procrastinated throughout the summer in finding housing at the university, so by the time I arrived in late August, the only housing left available was in the fraternities. That decision was the worst decision of my life! The second night in the fraternity I drank a third of fifth of Yukon Jack whiskey, drank 12 beers, and blacked out; from that night I began drinking alcoholically, pulling a night of binge drinking every two to three weeks. Soon I was introduced to marijuana, cocaine and LSD--and many other drugs.

Three years before, my mother had died from a long, three year bout with breast cancer. I had prayed so fervently for God to heal her, but as I watched my mother's body eaten away by the cancer, doubt ate away at my own faith. After she died I tried to find solace in the church, in volunteering at a Bible camp, and in reading my Bible--trying so hard to live the Christian life--but to no avail. My father, a pastor and missionary, had soon remarried and after my graduation returned to Japan to continue their missionary work. Now, in the fraternity I found that when I was high or drunk I could temporarily forget the enormous grief that I felt along with the pervasive guilt arising from my new lifestyle. To drown out my pain, I'd take a pint of whiskey at

a party, and guzzle the whole thing within 30 to 40 minutes --then I'd black out and often go berserk.

On one such night in the fraternity, at a party, I drank 7 double Mai Tai's, shot a fifth of Tequila along with two frat brothers, and then smoked a lot of marijuana. Feeling the onslaught of the alcohol coming on fast, I decided to run it off. I dressed in my Nike shirt, Nike shorts and Nike shoes and went running out into the night onto the U.W. campus. It was 25 degrees out. The University Police found me curled up in a ball in the bushes outside of one of the dormitories--in only my underwear--and in danger of freezing to death. They called my frat brothers and told them to come and pick me up at the U.W. Hospital or they'd throw me in the drunk tank at Harborview Hospital and I'd end up with a record. I spent the next three years repeating such stories every two to three weeks, and with each episode I not only had the unresolved grief over Mamma's death, but now my own shame over all the stupid things I was doing.



In my third year at the university, I spent the summer using and selling cocaine to support my habit. At a Grateful Dead concert I used nearly two grams of cocaine in less than an hour--a fatal dose for someone who weighed 112 pounds. On my bed later that night with my heart leaping out of my chest I called out to Jesus repeatedly, "Please save my life! Please don't let me die!" A friend who had found help with her addiction in Scientology introduced me to them. Within a few weeks, although I was finally free of the cocaine, I

found myself in something even more sinister. Not knowing where to turn, I called my father in Japan, blurting out on the phone, "Dad, I just spent \$1,200.00 on cocaine and I'm in Scientology." I expected my father who was a man of rage to blast me with his anger. All he said was, "Son, I'm flying home tomorrow." The next day at the airport, I waited for him to come through the double doors leading from the international terminal. It took him over an hour to get through customs. All along while I waited, I was sure he'd

make a scene at the airport, losing his temper in a rage. Finally, he came through the doors, carrying a suitcase in each hand. He caught sight of me--gaunt and skeletal at a 112 pounds. He didn't say anything. He just set down his bags, rushed over and swept me into his arms and held me, no words, no rage--just grace.

He spent a month with me, but soon after he returned to Japan I was back drinking and using drugs. Two year later and five years into my addiction, I went out drinking after work with some of my friends. We went to a bar and started drinking doubles. I drank 7 to 8 doubles in 40 minutes. I soon blacked out; the rest of the story was later told to me by my friends. One of my friends had forgotten his coat at the bakery where we all worked. Upon returning to the bakery I went berserk, hitting people, screaming and swearing, and then left the building and began running towards Interstate-5 which ran right next to the bakery. A friend caught my hand, but as I pulled away, I stumbled and fell, hitting my head against a curb. My friends drove me home, threw me on my bed, and then crashed on my living room floor because they were too drunk to drive. The next morning I awoke around 10:00 and found a grapefruit sized lump on the left side of my head which throbbed. After showering I called work to tell them that I wouldn't be able to come into work that day, but when the receptionist answered the phone I couldn't speak. My friends who were up by then realized something was wrong and drove me to the U.W. Hospital.

As soon as I arrived at the hospital and they saw the lump on my head they rushed me in to get a CAT scan. When Dr. Loeser--who was head of the Neurology Department at the University of Washington--came in along with 7 other resident doctors, he said to me, "Grant, you have a very serious head injury and because you let it bleed for 12 hours I don't think you will live, but if you do live you'll never speak again." I had five or six bleeds in my brain: a subarachnoid hemorrhage, a subdural and epidural hematoma in my speech center, two hemorrhages in my midbrain, and a contusion in the medial brain. I had seven days to lie in that hospital and think about my life. Somehow I was able to pass my father's phone number to the nurses; he had since retired to Olympia, Washington. Upon hearing of my head injury he called prayer chains of supporting churches all over the United States. On the third day, Dr. Loeser

came in and asked me to say the word, "bird." I knew the word and how to say it, but I couldn't make any sound whatsoever. On the seventh day, Dr. Loeser came in and asked me to say "Methodist Episcopal." I was able to respond, "Methodist Episcopal." God healed me! Dr. Loeser said, "You are a very lucky man." No, I am a very blessed man!

During those seven days I had much time to think about my life. I had destroyed every part of it--and had nearly died. I couldn't speak and had completely lost my sense of smell; I was so weak I could barely walk. I was going through withdrawal from the drugs, every square inch of my body itching. I couldn't go back to work. I couldn't begin my next quarter at the university. I couldn't pay my rent nor utilities--nor all of the hospital bills I was accruing. I literally had nothing left, with no where to turn. One decision can change your life forever! Late one night during that week in the hospital I gave away my life into the wounded hands of Jesus. My father and his new wife invited me to come and live with them in Olympia. In my brokenness I gratefully accepted their gracious offer.

My father took me to my first two AA meetings, setting aside all pride--even though I had so used him, having spent thousands of dollars of his money on drugs. It was at those AA meetings that I met Johann. He was quite a sight. He had long hair down to the center of his back with an equally long beard. He would talk openly of the love of Christ at the meetings, and then he'd invite anyone interested to come join him at Denny's to read the Bible together. At Denny's with 6 or 7 of us gathered around, he'd open his Bible and read a passage about God's grace and love. For the first time, I now heard the message of the grace and love of Jesus. All my life I had heard, "Change yourself enough so that you can come to Jesus so that He'll accept you; now He showed me that I could come to Jesus--just as I am and He would accept me and change me. Years later I found out that Johann had been in the U.S. illegally and was deported not too long after I met with him over coffee at Denny's.

Not knowing what to do with my life, I asked God to get me a job at night if he wanted me to return to school at a college near my parent's home. I put in one application for a janitorial position at Group Health, a local health coop. I was called in for an interview--which went badly. Two