

My Life Story - Ron (February 2009)

My name is Ron. I'm 58 years old, separated and have 2 daughters, 23 and 21.

The first 20 years of my life were successful and very easy. With a good middle-class East Vancouver family, I was intelligent, athletic, attractive and school valedictorian, got scholarships and a B.Sc. degree from U.B.C. in 1972.

At 22, with a good job and a bright future, I got married after a 1 year courtship. After 2 years, our marriage got really rough. After 3 years, my wife abandoned our marriage. She wanted to pursue her personal path to happiness and fulfillment. During this, my best friend abandoned me.

I was devastated, deeply depressed, tormented with pain, all alone and without hope for a long, long time. I escaped into some very wild, lonely and lost years.

Then, I met my second wife (to-be). She was tall, beautiful, intelligent, athletic, engaging and with sound moral values. She was a perfect, patient mate but I was afraid to commit to her. After a 6 year relationship, I did commit and we married.

We had 2 gifted daughters. We were a family. I coached my daughters' baseball, basketball and soccer teams. My wife helped at school and everywhere else. We always had great family holidays, including Disneyland and an Alaskan cruise.

Outwardly, we were the model of a "successful" family. We prospered financially. We owned a modest East Vancouver house, 2 cars and had retirement savings, education funds for both daughters, and substantial savings.

Inwardly, I was empty and unfulfilled, often in pain and without hope of ever being happy or satisfied in my life. I have suffered serious depression, in waves, for over 30 years. Many times I cried out, "God, please take me, take me now."

I inflicted great emotional harm on my children, especially during my many prolonged periods of deep, dark depression. I was self-centered, childish and wicked. One daughter didn't know if her Dad would be alive when she came home from school. The other was afraid to say anything that might make it so. So evil.

I had lost several well-paying jobs due to corporate downsizing and outsourcing. I almost always had hated my work. I had some lucrative consulting contracts, but they were few. I passionately pursued a dream of business success. I failed.

I had no income. My wife worked 2 days a week. Our savings were being slowly depleted. I needed a job. At age 51, I was old, technically out-of-date and looking for work in a decimated job sector. I applied for 31 jobs and got 1 interview.

My wife was fed up, running on empty and without hope of her ever being happy. She wanted a divorce. I didn't. I wanted to reconcile. She didn't. She reluctantly agreed to marriage counseling for her love of our daughters, aged 14 and 16.

My wife had been a very strong and loving wife for over 18 years and caring friend for almost 25 years. I broke her. I didn't try to, didn't want to, but I did. So evil.

My life was falling apart. Then, I attended some classes for people seeking to freely explore their own personal questions about life, God, Jesus and the Bible.

I had gone to Sunday School. I believed that I was 'saved'. I was deceived. I never had peace in my heart, only some calm times in my life. I never had freedom from my feelings of guilt, doubt, shame, fear, anxiety, bitterness, anger and pride.

In March 2002, I finally submitted to God. I accepted Jesus into my heart as the LORD of my life, not just as a Savior in my mind. The Holy Spirit came to live in me. I was born again as a child of God by His Spirit.

Four months later, my wife demanded that I leave. I complied. My wife abandoned our 18 year marriage. My daughters idolized their Mom, a very loving and dedicated mother. My family, my personal prized idol, had rejected me. During this, my best and only friend abandoned me.

I was devastated. My heart was ripped out. My mind was tortured during the day and tormented by nightmares at night. I was in the greatest pain I had ever known. I was driving around in my car with a baseball bat, a length of hose for the tailpipe and a heart of hate. I should be dead ... but Jesus gives life.

My marriage, family and life crisis was His blessing to me. I needed the Pride to be kicked out of me. He allowed me to be humbled. And He blessed me abundantly.

He healed me of depression, over 30 years of deep, debilitating, destructive depression. I had no family, no friend and great pain but no depression. I know that Jesus is a living, loving personal God who still heals today.

He gave me peace. Right now, I'm caring for the daily needs of my 90 year old dying Dad and dealing with divorce lawyers. I haven't enjoyed a family meal, gathering or vacation in over 6 years. And, it's just perfect. I have His peace, a peace that's not natural, that doesn't make sense and certainly not deserved.

He gave me freedom. First, He gave me certainty about my salvation. Now, I have no doubt. I know that I'm going to heaven while I certainly know I deserve hell. Jesus gives this great gift to all born again believers.

He gave me freedom from the bondage of my feelings. Now, I'm free from guilt, doubt, shame, fear, anxiety, anger and unforgiveness. And, I'm not a prisoner of church, rituals or religion. He is a living God and His Truth has set me free.

He gave me a new heart, filled with His love. Every week, I serve poor and needy people, at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, in the streets and alleys of the Vancouver Downtown Eastside and in the Sunday service at The Warehouse.

Every month, I give my testimony and share His Word at the Union Gospel Mission. I give hope to people who are hurting, lonely and lost. I give them God's Truth. Only Jesus saves and gives new life. I encourage them to believe and trust Him.

Today, I urge you to accept Jesus and get the peace and freedom only He can give.

Update (July 2009): I'm now 59. My Dad died (May 13). My wife divorced me (June 4). Our home that we raised our kids in was sold (June 17). And always, His peace. Praise the Lord Jesus!