

# TESTIMONY FROM PRISON

As far back as I can remember, I (Charlie) was told to go to Sunday School, catechism, and church services. My mom or dad would drop me off and then pick me back up. I always thought it was funny that they didn't go themselves. Their standard line was "Do as I say, not as I do." I stopped going when I was 16 years old. When I did go, it was only so I could play ball on the church-sponsored baseball team.

In 1972 I got married at age 18. I thought I was ready to be married and to be a father. My wife's brother was an army chaplain; he came over one night to tell me about Christ. My spirit was convicted and I thought I made Christ my Lord. As I reflect back on that day and on my actions after that day, I am quite sure that I paid terrific lip service to Jesus. I did little more than acknowledge His existence; I certainly did not pay much more attention to Him. It is funny looking back. I called some friends to hear the chaplain with me that night. They gave their lives to Christ. They went the way of Christ; I went the way of the world.

Divorce followed quickly after I was caught with other women. I had also been doing drugs (pot, mushrooms). Then I learned the excitement of dealing. I had it all: money, power, fame, women, cars. I would stop over at my friends but they had changed and I was bored with them. I had completely forgotten what I said to the Lord that night; my friends

remembered.

One of my deals went bad; it was with the wrong people. I decided that for my own safety, I had better leave town. I came out to the west coast to start over and to leave behind the drugs, guns, women, and my past. I brought a beautiful, home-spun type girl out with me. We lasted a few years. However, I was doing very well in business, making a name for myself as a mechanic. Then I met Amy. She helped to quiet me down; with her I no longer was floundering. Time went by and we were doing great. I had my shop - booked three weeks ahead. Money was pouring in; we did or got what we wanted: cruises, jewelry, Mercedes. Money was no object.

Then on October 21, 1992 at 2 A.M. my dogs awakened me to the sound of a van driving by our house. It was driving very slow with its lights off. It stopped three houses down. Three young men got out and headed toward my friend & neighbor's house. I grabbed my gun and headed up the street to investigate. I encountered the three men. Two of them ran away; the third one turned on me and a wrestling match resulted. We fell to the ground and the gun went off. The young man was struck in the back of the head. He bled to death.

I was charged with 1st degree murder. I couldn't understand how but those were the charges.

Turn over.

I remember in County Jail that someone told me I needed Jesus in my life. I told him what I needed was a good lawyer. Little did I know how right that prisoner was. A little over a month later, after not being able to sleep more than 2 hours a night, I gave myself to the Lord (for real this time). This was not lip service and I was not going to forget this time.

I needed a miracle there in that jail. Little did I know then that He had performed a miracle in my heart, and that there were many miracles to come. I haven't looked back since and my Saviour has continued to open doors and has allowed me to grow in His grace and strength. I now have a real relationship with the Creator of the universe, one which draws me closer to Him each day.

I wound up with a life sentence (eternal life). I also wound up with nine years in prison. That beats 25 years to life. I have found that in the middle of tough times, God sometimes calms the storm; sometimes He calms my heart and lets the storm rage on. He has done both for me. I am so much better off now.

I have no idea where I am being led. I only know that I am available and willing to go. My plans are, after my release, to open another shop. As to the real plans for me, you're talking to the wrong person. Join me down here on my knees and we will ask the one who is in charge. I do everyday. Each day I search the Scriptures to determine and stay in God's will which is my goal in life.

**Reading the Scriptures gives me breadth;**

studying it gives me depth.

**This life of mine is to be continued.**

*Charlie has been a blessing to me (Bruce). He is a leader in the prison chapel program, and is a mighty man for God there. The younger guys look up to him for advice and prayer support. Pray for Charlie. He paroles in ten months.*