

MY TESTIMONY

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From a young age all I ever knew was addiction. My mother and father split up when we were young and after that my mother became dependent on alcohol. I always said I would never get bad with alcohol; I didn't want to be like that.

Well, I ended up worse. I thought I had a good life when I was young. I met my partner Campbell when I was only 16 and had our daughter Sammy-Jo when I was 18 years. Life then was great. We had our own family, our own home and a good business, which helped us financially. Campbell thrived on making money, in fact he worked all the hours he could. It was the love of money that ruined our lives as a family. Campbell started buying in "diaconal tablets" which were heavy pain killers for cancer patients. He would take them to Dumfries, sell them and double his money. However, one night he came home with heroin. I was totally naive to drugs and didn't know what heroin was.

Looking back in my life, if I had known the effects of heroin I would never have touched it. I praise God; however, for it was through all my trials I got to know His love and peace in my heart. We all need to be broken before the Lord can work in our hearts.

A few years into my addiction and I started to lose everything, not just material things--I lost the people I loved--my partner, my stepfather then to top that, I lost my mother to cancer. My mum had her own problems but before mum died she gave her heart to the Lord. She trusted him while lying in the intensive care unit in the hospital. She knew she was dying and was worried about leaving us but she trusted the Lord and prayed for us.

I believe it was through my mum's death that the Lord started his work in my life. I first heard the Word of God when my mum and her friend used to take me to a new life church. My mum had been searching for the Lord for a long time. I didn't understand too much about the Lord when I went there and it wasn't until I started going into the Helping Hand Café in Cumnock that I started to understand a bit more. Sometimes I used to hate going in, as there was a guy working there who used to heavy preach to me. However, the love they had for us was real. I knew that they actually cared for us even although we were heroin addicts. I am sure if the Lord was with us today He wouldn't be sitting with the rich and famous, He would be with the poor and needy. The Lord loves us so much He gave His only begotten Son for us--even for the addict! The Lord started working with me at that time but I never really noticed.

After my mother's death I got busted by the Police and caught with heroin. I remember the police saying to me, "We'll get you!" They certainly did, for my daughter got taken into care and sent to live with her gran (Campbell's mum). At this point I was totally lost and couldn't see a way out. Only God could help me. He has a plan and a future for us. The next day I found out I had a blood clot and had to go to hospital. They needed to give me warfarin injections to scatter the clot and because I was a heroin user they wanted to keep me in so they knew I would definitely get the injections. However, I managed to talk them out of keeping me in

hospital, for I didn't want to be in hospital with a drug habit. My brother phoned Ian and Mary, from the Helping Hand Café, and asked them to pick me up. My head was fried. I had recently lost my mum, now I had lost my daughter, I was facing police charges of being involved in the concern to supply a Class A drug, I was going to lose my council house due to my illegal activities and to top it all I got told, by the doctor, that if I continued to inject heroin I would end up killing myself. The Lord sent Ian and Mary to me for a reason and I ended up staying with them to break my heroin habit.

While I was living with them I had to go to church meetings. At first I found them boring, but soon the Lord started to speak to me. Certain scriptures would stick out and when someone was preaching I felt, "How does he know -- he is talking about me." It was amazing, for God is the only one who knows what's in your heart. After going to a lot of meetings I learned more and more about the Lord. He really spoke to me about the coming again of Jesus and what would happen if you are left behind and lost in your sins. I knew I was a sinner and had done wrong in my life. God is amazing though, He can forgive us of every sin we have ever done. Coming to the Lord is the best choice that I've ever made in my life.

The time I actually got saved was a Sunday morning. I remember everyone going to the church. I sat out on the door step and thought, "What if Jesus comes for His church and I get left behind with Satan." I was really scared to be left behind. I had read in the Bible about the coming of the Lord and had watched the *Left Behind* films, so I had a picture in my head about what it would be like. I also had a picture of what it would be like in heaven, no pain, no sorrow and no tears. I had had enough pain in my life. As I sat at the door step, I totally confessed my sins to the Lord and he forgave me. The peace I had was amazing for I knew I had been forgiven for all my sins. I didn't, at the time, feel a change in me for I was waiting on something happening. However, in Gods timing, He has totally changed me.

Not long after I got saved my brother came to live with the boys upstairs in the Helping Hand rehab. He was living with his girlfriend at the time but drugs were wasting his life too. It was amazing the way God worked. I went to visit him and could see he wasn't himself. Before I left to go, I gave him Ian's phone number so he could contact me. Few days later God brought him to us. He also trusted in the Lord. A year after I had been saved my brother and I both got baptised together--that was a better buzz than any drug, to see my brother getting baptised and trusting in the Lord.

Before my brother and I got baptised, we had drug charges to go up for-- "possession with intent to supply". I knew deep down I would get a custodial sentence, but I had been heavy praying about it and so were other Christians. I told God that if it was His will for me to go to jail I would accept that. I had been getting regular, random drug tests by both Ian and Mary and the Social Work Department, and had been giving clean urine. I had to prove to the social workers that I could stay away from heroin and keep other drug users away from my home. The Lord had provided for my needs with a private let of a flat in Ochiltree and I had got Sammy-Jo back home again. This was a hard time for us. I wasn't using heroin to cope with struggles and therefore had to learn to cope with life and take things to the Lord. It was especially hard knowing I had this sentence hanging over me. I did fall a few times. It wasn't easy as temptation was always there, especially as I was on methadone and going into the chemist every day I was bumping into people who were still using. I knew though, that if I

went to jail and had any other drug than methadone in my system; I would get struck off the methadone in prison, which was a scary thought after being on it for years.

The morning came for us to go to court. It was weird for I thought I would have been nervous and I wasn't--maybe just a little worried. We ended up getting sentenced to prison, my brother got 4mths, which I felt terrible with guilt about, for I was the one who had been doing the dealing. The judge gave me a 6-month sentence. I knew I would go down. I deserved it. I had ruined lives by selling drugs. Sadly at the time you don't see it like that. Satan pulls you down and down until you are in the gutter. Before I went up in front of the judge I had given Ian my house keys so that Sammy-Jo could get in for her things. For us to be taken away from each other again was hard and painful and it broke our hearts. Even though she went back to live with her gran I was worried that social workers would let her gran keep her. Social workers knew I had this charge to go up for and they were waiting till after the court case before deciding if I could get full custody of her again. God stepped in there and answered my prayers as we got back together the day I came out of prison. But while inside I kept on saying, "God you gave me back my daughter, why separate us again?" However, God knows best for us, it is all in His timing, not ours. I had to learn a lot of patience for, being addicted to drugs; you are used to getting things when you want them. Patience was a big trial!! The day I got sentenced, I slept all the way up to Stirling in the back of the Reliance van. God was with me all the way.

I ended up having to give up my flat in Ochiltree as half my sentence (which was all I would need to do) was 3 months and my housing benefit would get stopped before that. I thanked the Lord for the support of other Christians for I knew they would be praying for me. I wasn't too concerned about losing my flat as the rent was expensive plus I was feeling lonely out there. I had prayed about this a lot.

While I was in Cornton Vale the Lord used me, so He had a plan behind it all. There was a girl in there who was into playing the "Ouija" board. A lot of girls would play with the spirits of Satan thinking they were getting messages from loved ones. It was far from loved ones for Lindsey. She was drawn into playing with the spirit--it was the devil telling her to drown herself in the pond outside the block of cells where we slept. I remember the girls set up this board in the cell one night. I was a bit wary of it but at the same time the devil tried to pull me into it. That night everyone was scared to go to the toilet, let alone their own rooms for a sleep. There were about 7 of us in this one cell and we were petrified, for a lot of scary things had been going on. Satan must have been loving it to see us all scared. It was then God used me. He took over for I jumped up and told them not to be daft; Jesus had defeated the devil at the cross. I can't remember all I said because the Lord took over. It was amazing for after I finished speaking we were running about the hall--God took the fear from us. The next day, Lindsey prayed to the Lord and stopped playing the "Ouija" board. That's when I knew the reason for my sentence. God's amazing how He will bring His good work out of our times of hardship.

Before I got released from prison I received a letter to tell me that a couple of Christians had offered to help me pay off my rent arrears that I had with the council. This would enable me to get back on the council waiting list for a house. I was blown away the Lord was going to provide a home for me. I thanked the Lord for answered prayer, but God was more powerful than that, He didn't just provide money to pay off rent arrears He provided a fully furnished

flat. Totally amazing!!! I got out of the jail in March last year and stayed with Ian and Mary till the buying of the house took place--it was being bought by the Helping Hand Trust who was then going to rent it to me and Sammy-Jo. When they took me up to see this house for the first time I thought, "Wow, God loves me that much He has provided everything I need even down to the cutlery. A couple of weeks later I moved into my "palace" and I would joke and say I was the "Princess of the Helping Hand". In the eyes of the Lord we are Royalty to Him, as He has brought us into His family. In Christ, I've got loads of family now, even though Satan stole my own family. Praise God for He's restoring the years I lost to Satan.

When I first moved into my own home things were going great, but sadly I started jumping about with the wrong crowd again. I thought I was strong enough. I was doing things on my own strength not in God's. It was then that I fell big time. I ended up back on heroin and nearly lost everything I had gained with the Lord. One night I was at home and I received a phone call from one of the elders from the church. I had a part time job with him. The Lord had even provided work for me. He phoned me to see how I was doing for I hadn't been going to church. I know now that I wasn't giving the Lord every part of me. I wanted to hold on to my old life for some reason. After I got off the phone I was breaking my heart for I didn't like what I had turned my life into again. It wasn't fair what I was doing to my daughter. She had been put through enough, through my selfishness. I knew the only answer was to trust the Lord with my whole life and even to free me from methadone. I knew my addiction to methadone, even although it was prescribed by the doctor, was a big hindrance in me being right with the Lord.

A few months before I had prayed to God to help me and asked him to help me break the methadone habit. Just days later I went into the chemist to find out my prescription had been cut by 10mls. I thought, "I need to be careful of what I pray for". I wanted off the meth but I was petrified to come off it for I had heard a lot of horror stories about how painful it was to detox off it. However, God worked it all out again in His timing, for before I knew it I was down to 34mls from 60mls. I went and spoke to Ian and Mary and confessed I had a heroin habit back. They let me come into their home again to start a "rattle" off heroin and methadone. I praise God and give thanks for He's the one who has carried me. I had back pain for about 3 days constantly. When you are in that pain no one really knows what you are going through, only the Lord knows. I remember lying in my bed crying with the pain and feeling sorry for myself--it was all self-inflicted!! Then I thought of what Jesus went through on the cross for me, for us. He was tortured to save us. He got beaten and scarred and was forsaken by God for He couldn't look at Him because He was bearing our sins. That's when my heart totally changed and I gave my life to Jesus, for He died for me. I totally trust Him with my life. Before, I found it hard to love the Lord before my deceased partner and family. Now I love him more than anything else, He's given me a love to share with others. It is great to be in love with Christ. I wake up with a song in my heart to worship Him, and He speaks to me every day through His word. He is not only good, He is awesome.

Since the Lord has set me free from methadone I feel totally alive. I cry out to the Lord now and it is great to be humble before him. Psalm 116: "I love the Lord, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live." Amen. God calls each one of us by our own names; it's totally amazing how much He loves us. Trust the Lord with all your heart and He will give you rest and peace. I promised the Lord if He got me off the meth and the drugs that I would never sin against him deliberately.

We can't help our sinful nature as we were born into the world with sin and under the "The Prince of Darkness". But we can repent of our sins, turn away from them and trust the "God of Miracles". Psalm 119 jumped out to me and touched my heart, "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."

This is just the start of my life, I am no longer "a drug addict" I am a "new creation in Christ". Only the Lord can set us free. Life through the Spirit (Rom. ch 8 v 6, The mind controlled by the sinful nature is death. But the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace...

Psalm 71 is my prayer and my song of praise.