

## A Changed Life

By: Marty Howell

In 1973 I moved to Casper Wyoming, working in the oil industry. I was making more money than ever before, over \$170,000 year. I had a wife and three kids, I owned a nice house, cars, boat, lake house.... I had it all.

In 1974 my co-worker introduced me to cocaine. He told me it would make me feel good. It did. In a few weeks I was addicted. By 1976 my marriage had ended and I lost all my worldly possessions.

A typical day started with a line of cocaine and a shower. I had a set of scales on the kitchen counter to weigh the cocaine. I spent about \$500 a day on cocaine and \$300 a day on bar tabs. My evenings were spent at beer parties and poker parties. Because I had money and drugs, I always had friends around. I became paranoid and lived in constant fear of being arrested. I hid inside my apartment, peeking out the curtained windows.

One evening I was sitting on the back porch with my nine year old son. In my wallet were paychecks and bonus checks totaling over \$40,000 but I told my son, "I am the most miserable man on earth." I was trying to fill the void in my life with drugs and alcohol.

In 1979, with my addictions completely running my life, I thought I was superior. (Cocaine does that!) I got greedy and offered to buy out my business partners. Fed up with my behavior, instead of selling out to me, they locked me out of my office. They paid me \$35,000 to go away.

With the \$35,000 I started a new oil-related business with one of my drug buddies. He sold drugs at our office, and we had beer parties and poker parties at the office. My old customers refused to do business with a druggie, so the business failed. In early 1981 my partner and drug buddy committed suicide.

On September 3, 1981, I came home at 2:00 a.m., drunk and stoned as usual. I stumbled to the couch and started flipping channels with the remote. (Yes, there were remotes in 1981!) I stopped on the Christian station "The 700 Club" where Pastors Pat Robinson and Ben Kenslow were asking if anyone out there needed Christ. I changed channels, several times, but kept landing on that station. Pat Robinson asked me to put my hands on the TV screen and ask God to forgive my sins. I crawled on my hands and knees to the TV, put my hands on the screen, and prayed the sinner's prayer. I immediately came up off the floor with my arms in the air, praising God, completely sober and free from addiction! It was a miraculous cure!

I asked the Lord what I should do next, and he led me to pour all liquor down the drain, flush all the drugs down the toilet and I destroyed all the drug paraphernalia. I disposed of hundreds and hundreds of dollars of drugs and alcohol that very night.

I went to sleep and woke up the next morning, sober for the first time in seven long years. My body was cleansed of drugs, with no hint of withdrawal symptoms. I felt revived, exhilarated, and joyous. The grass looked greener and the flowers smelled sweeter than I ever remembered.

I called my praying sister who had been praying for me all those years and told her about my salvation and cure from addiction. She immediately sent me a Bible, which I carried for over twenty years, and which is now preserved under glass.

My friends saw an immediate change in my behavior. They asked a Christian acquaintance if I had gone through rehab, and even though he and I had not spoken, he knew and explained that I had been touched by God. Those former friends still offered me drugs, trying to get their old friend back. I completely changed my lifestyle and friendships, and I have never touched drugs again.

It took several years and a move to Oklahoma to rebuild my life, but now, through the grace of God, and the belief in sowing and reaping, I am completely debt-free, own a very successful oilfield equipment business, have a happy home life, complete with wife, children and grandchildren, a wonderful church family and pastor. I am blessed beyond measure.