

Smitty: a Disciple of Jesus

Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and **make them my disciples:**

I will be with you always be with to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:18-20

"You did not choose me; I chose you
and appointed you **to go and bear much fruit,**
the kind of fruit that endures.

And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my
name.

John 15:16

THE STORY OF A "FRUIT", SMITTY!




It seems that lately I've been overwhelmed in thinking about the past 12 years, dreams about highlights, low lights and nightmares. By the Grace of God there are more highlights than lows. However, what has been bemoaning me the most is that, after being saved from a near fatal disease (alcoholism) and being brought into the light to pay forward the never ending gift grace freely given to me, I continue to ask WHY my hard work was going **unglorified**. MY hard work? MY glory? Wow, that's arrogant! Instead of praising God for being alive, I wanted kudos too? Geez, really?

Now let me make things perfectly clear. I'm not walking around all day looking for my own personal praise team. That ain't going to happen! And it's not that I dwell on the subject all day long either. You see, after my fall from the grace of a loving God, I lost everything. My 6-figure job, my wife divorced me, my kids hated me, I had no money, no insurance, and even worse, no dignity. I thought I was truly the most destitute person on the face of the Earth, not realizing that

all this was purely materialistic, I proceeded to sit on a 'pity pot' the size of Montana.

It wasn't until I was placed into a nursing home in "The Hood" of Detroit (E. 7 Mile & Conant) at St. Michael's, where bedridden, I learned how to talk to God on a one-on-one basis. It was there that Jesus and I became the best of friends. Not that I'm not friends with Papa, (but sometimes it's easier to talk to the son than it is to the Father. You get my drift? This is point where I witnessed miracles for not only myself, but for others who were in touch with Papa (Romans 8:15) thru me. **Awesome!** I became the best friend and confidant of a 94 year old woman. The old lady, who refused to eat, was completely transformed thru the compassion shown by God thru me. I showed 3 other men how I did my own leg exercises and regained the use of my legs. Yes, we were all bedridden, but the fire of The Holy Spirit was starting to burn brighter and hotter in my heart. I could feel his presence everywhere. I passed that on to the other men and said, if it worked for me, it would work for them too. To gradually see them up and around was nothing shy of a miracle in itself.

Eventually I was released after a year. My union guys got me re-instated at work (took the a whole year) so I was able to get a small apartment that was far from what you would call 'rather nice', but it sufficed. Then I worked on getting my family back together. This would take another two years but in the long run I'm remarried and back in good graces with the kids.

At the same time I'm was introduced to the 3 biggest components in my walk with Christ and in my sobriety. Celebrate Recovery (a Christian recovery program), Pastor Tom Kaastra and Johnny O., my sponsor. Funny thing, Johnny lived in Pastor Tom's basement (nicely finished) and  eventually I got to buy this house. Anyway, thru the CR program, I became a leader and taught others how to come to Christ. I helped them get rid of that excess baggage (i.e. hurts, hang-ups and habits) they've been carrying around all their lives. This is all part of **MY transformation**. (Easter Impact, Part 5). I have become a completely new person

because, as the Bible, says in Romans 12:2, “*by letting the Lord change the way you think...*”. That is the whole thing in a nut-shell. Rewiring the way you think. At times I find myself wearing out 3 pairs of kneecaps, kicking myself in the ass for not allowing this to happen sooner. BUT...it’s ALWAYS in His timing!

☒ Having had this spiritual awakening (Step 12 of AA), I try to put others first. Now, this is natural as breathing. Strange, I’m not really changing the things I used to do, I’m just doing them for a completely different reason.

Looking back on these past 12 years, I find it hard to relate to ***the feeling of recognition***. After saving my life, then allowing me to be a part of all these miracles, how could I want recognition? The truth be told...I really don’t, it’s just that sometimes I “**overthink**” things. But Papa truly knows my heart. He must like what He sees because He still uses me to do the work of His son, Jesus. I am so righteously proud that I have been chosen to this task. A worn out drunken addict, who was saved by grace, to spread the Good News to others. As for the recognition? Why was I plagued with pain and frustration during *the in-between* parts, going from point A to point B? My discovery, **there’s no resurrection without crucifixion!**“