

From Chrystal Meth To Chrystal Clean

By Pastor Cynthia Harris Corder

“Put your hands behind your back, you are under arrest Ms. Harris.” As one of the police officers flashed my mug shot, I heard myself saying, “That’s not me! I know she looks like me, but I’m telling you - that is not me!” I’d been living a lie for so long; it was second nature to me. When it came to the police, my motto had been, “Catch me if you can!” Little did I know that this particular encounter would be the end of my career as a drug dealer and the beginning of my new life. It was February 4, 2000, and in seven short days I would meet my Lord and Savior in a county jail cell. God was about to deliver me from a fifteen-year addiction and a life of bondage that had begun as a young girl.

On my first birthday, my mother was forced to give me up for adoption due to family struggles. It would be years before I would see her again. Of course as a child I couldn’t comprehend that any circumstance could justify this separation. A feeling of rejection crept in to my heart, despite the fact that I had been adopted into a good home. Growing up I had an awesome mom, I was a good kid, and I loved school. I was actively involved in sports; I excelled academically and had many friends. As I approached adolescence the feelings of rejection surfaced. Conditions at home created new pressures. My mother worked long hours to provide for our family and I was a spirited adventurous youth unaware that I had a predisposition toward addictive behavior. I actively looked for a place to be accepted.

It wasn’t long until I found that acceptance in drugs. As a freshman at age thirteen, I started hanging out with the “stoners” at my local high school. Marijuana led to acid and Friday night beer keggers in the local park. On one of these occasions, my parents were out of town, a perfect opportunity for my older sister and I to invite some guys back to our house for an after-hours party. Our night of partying turned into a weekend, and by the end of it my sister, who was only one year older than me, made the life altering decision to move out with her new acquaintance. Her new home was a drug house. After visiting her frequently, I made some connections, including the person who would train me up in my new livelihood - drug sales. This is when my love affair with crystal meth started. The very first time I snorted the drug I was hooked. One time is really all it took. My new friend showed me the ropes of multi-level marketing. I was fronted the drugs and I, in turn, fronted it to others to sell. I was successful right away. As successful as a 15-year-old girl on acid, attending high school could be. When the opportunity arose for me to move out of my mother’s house to live with my boyfriend, I jumped at it. My mother did not want me to go, but there was no stopping me. After the move, I was unable to maintain my school schedule, my new place and my drug sales, so of course school had to go. Despite having always made straight A’s, I dropped out of high school on my sixteenth birthday, never to return.

My first encounter with the law happened shortly after that. My mom always warned me it would happen, but I never believed it. The house was raided. I was released because I was a minor. It was a joke to me. I just got braggin' rights. I'd been busted!

The second bust happened when I was 20. I was higher up on the food chain of the drug world but still not top dog. Following this bust my boyfriend spent the next six years of his life locked in an 8'x10' prison cell somewhere in California. This caused me to spiral deeper into the drug scene with even more success until finally I was one of the major drug dealers in my hometown of Portland, Oregon. The next time someone went down, it would be me. By this time my love affair with crystal meth had turned into a love/hate relationship. Mostly hate, I wanted to quit. Every single day I used every ounce of my willpower and said, "Today I will not use this drug!" But every day before noon my resolve disappeared and I did the only thing I knew to do. I was trapped. Without the power of God in my life to back up that resolve, it was hopeless. I desperately wanted out, but there seemed to be no way.

I was in my late twenties and I had nothing to show for my life except for a rap sheet and deep emotional scars. I would lay awake at night sometimes and remember going to church on Easter with my Aunt Ruby. They told me that Jesus died for my salvation and if I ever needed His help I could just call upon His name and be saved. I stood at the altar as an itty-bitty girl and earnestly asked Jesus into my heart. I remembered when I was in 6th grade I went to a Bible camp with a neighbor and asked Jesus to be Lord of my life. How did my life get so out of control? How could I ever get back to Him? Several times I considered asking Jesus for help. I knew if I asked Him He would help me but was convinced I would never stop doing drugs unless I was locked up. I couldn't pray because I didn't want God sending me to jail to get clean!

Sin had taken me farther than I wanted to go and kept me far longer than I wanted to stay. At this point I was living in an abandoned house with nothing. I lost everything the drug money had bought and everyone who ever loved me was pushed away. I had several outstanding warrants and had been on the run for a solid year. No one would sell me drugs because I had ripped people off and my credit was no good. My family tried to help me, but they assumed I would end up in prison or worse. Sometimes when we get to the end of ourselves it is an open door for God to come in and begin His work. On the outside I may have looked like a lost cause, but God sees our hearts, our potential. He sees who He created us to be.

February 4th 2000, the first night in jail is always the toughest. I woke up thinking, "Where am I?" Is this a dream? Reality hit like a train. I was locked up...again! But this time would prove to be different. As if someone was choreographing the events, a transformation began to take place. My new cellmate, Stephanie, encouraged me to read a book. The book was a testimony written as a novel. I read the whole thing. A strange feeling that maybe there was hope, a chance that it wasn't all over, began to well up inside of me. I got down on the cold cement floor of the cell, and prayed "God get me out of here if you are real." I did not know what it meant but I knew in my heart there was a GOD and that He loved me!

Soon after that I was placed in lockdown. Thank God for lockdown! I never would have made it in general population. I had no foundation, nothing to stand on. God began to disciple me in that cell. For 23 hours a day, it was God and I going through the Bible. I would read something and then put it into practice! During those weeks, I immersed myself in the Word of God, and He began to transform me by the renewing of my mind, just like the Bible says! I have never been the same since! I was Free at Last! My God always hears our prayers. He got me out of that jail cell, and out of that lifestyle, never to return!

“Harris! Roll up!” These words were music to my ears. They meant freedom. God had done it! I was being released from jail. There was a bed in a treatment facility with my name on it. I had been in this same facility 2 years ago and I walked. But God is the God of second chances. My second time here proved to be different also. Now God was with me to give me the power to break free. I applied the principal of the 12 steps to my life. The first time I picked up the AA book I saw God all through it. I knew God was going to use this in my life. I had used drugs so many years I needed practical tools, which the steps provided. Not all church people realize what a person coming out of drugs is going through and the people and principles from AA could help to fill in those gaps. Drug treatment helped my cognitive thinking to get my life on track. God always knows what we need. It felt so good to excel at something again. I completed the treatment. I finished something and graduated!

My last day of treatment was literally my first day of church. I heard the testimony of Pastor Larry Huch from a friend on the streets and I was amazed that God had set someone else free like me and that God had used him to actually become a pastor. I had to go see this guy. My first day at New Beginnings, I sat on the back row. I had not stepped into a church for twenty years. I was so full of the joy of the Lord. I was in the body of Christ that I had I read so much about in the Bible. I heard Pastor Larry Huch’s testimony and I thought, “I am home!”

I spent a big percentage of my free time at the church. I attended Free at Last Weekends; I joined leadership classes, including the Christ Centered 12 Step group called Overcomers, taking advantage of every opportunity to learn. I volunteered by washing dishes, sitting at the information table, making follow up calls or whatever they needed me to do. My new motto was “I can do it!”

In 2002 I enrolled in the Christian Leadership Center for a one-year program. At the end of the course I had the opportunity to intern as a volunteer in every area of the church, which led to a full-time paid position. I became the receptionist!

In 2004 I moved to Dallas, TX with Pastors Larry and Tiz to help pioneer the church in the metroplex. As always- whatever needed to be done I would respond, “I can do it!” The church grew and I was a part of every area of ministry at one time or another. For the next two years I prayed that God would bring our Dallas congregation a pastor for an Overcomers ministry, so that I could support them in that work which had helped me so much in my early walk with the Lord. After having dinner with my Overcomers Pastor from Oregon, she asked me, “Cynthia, why aren’t you doing Overcomers?” A light bulb went off: I was the one to do it!

In Feb 2007, seven years to the day after my encounter with Jesus in that county jail cell, I launched the Overcomers Ministry at DFW New Beginnings. People came from the North, South, East and West. This ministry is a place where people can meet with others who understand the challenges of overcoming addiction and where we as a church really believe that you can break free from your past and move into your future.

Today, I am sitting in my office writing this article from the desk of Pastor Cynthia Harris-Corder. I am honored to be a servant of Jesus Christ and a servant to the body of Christ under the covering of Pastors Larry and Tiz Huch. They saw potential in someone like me and gave me a chance to shine for Jesus. Everything that the enemy meant for bad, God turned it around for good! I get the opportunity to send Pastor Larry Huch's books, *Free at Last* and *The Ten Curses That Block the Blessing* around the world, knowing that God will use them to touch lives, just as that book I received in jail touched mine. When letters pour into Larry Huch Ministries from the television program I respond with resources. I pray over the books as I send them out and release the salvation of the Lord. Most recently I sent books to the same jail that I was saved in! All it took for this five time loser who used drugs for fifteen years, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, was a book in a cold dark jail cell and the power of the Living God to set *this* captive free. Never lose hope and keep praying because whom the Son sets free is free indeed!

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