

Hello, My name is Nathan and I am an alcoholic. With an introduction like that you may already have a preconceived notion of what my past was like, and you're probably not all that far off from the truth. To be clear, I definitely did not come from a hard life. I grew up in a loving family, and lived a very fortunate early life. I started a good career early and had things most people would be grateful to have. I married the love of my life and we started living an exciting adventure together with great friends and family members. None of these things, or people, however, was I truly grateful for or to. I was selfish, self-centered, and egotistical. Never having or getting enough, and going through life thinking I had been cheated out of those things I truly deserved. I was never content with what I had and could never get enough of what I wanted.

It soon became evident that I couldn't get enough of something specific, alcohol. I drank every night, and not just a little. I had a job that kept me away from home for extended periods of time so it was easy for me to lie about how much I truly drank while I was gone, and even easier for me to justify the amount I drank when I was home. My job had random drug testing, which is the only factor that kept me from going down a path of abusing illicit drugs or pills. And even though I would get tested for drinking as well, it was easy enough for me to get around it without getting caught. I knew that I had a problem but didn't want to admit my weakness to anyone. I would have mornings after blackouts where I would swear off alcohol forever but turn around and be drinking that very night. I'd try to stop drinking for a short period of time but again be drinking that same night yet again. I became more and more reckless and less and less available to the people around me. I was destroying my life and dragging those close to me down as well. Not only would I fight with my wife, I would ignore her, belittle her, and frankly scare her with my behavior. Friends and family started to become worried for me, but I was a master manipulator and would have nothing to do with their concern.

I did not let God into my life even with all the blackouts, the anger, and embarrassing situations I put myself in night after night. Some nights during a binge I would pray to God out of desperation to help me stop. It's not that I never got an answer, I just never listened. I truly just wasn't ready to hear what God had to say. One day, I got a message. I had another binge drinking night, I was away from home, at work. There was an early morning flight I was supposed to get on that it turns out I would never make. I had slept past my alarm and knowing I would be late ran down to the hotel van to catch a ride to the airport. There was a man who noticed me getting onto the hotel van, and he noticed that I was still reeking of alcohol, not hung over but instead still actually legally drunk. Through a series of calls and actions he was able to stop me from getting to the plane I was supposed to get on. This was God working good deeds through one of his children. You see I wasn't just supposed to get on this flight, I was the Captain of the flight, the pilot. Fifty of God's children were being put into my hands to get them safely to home, work, vacation, or wherever they were going and I was putting their lives in danger. God of course would have none of that and quickly put a stop to it. I ended up losing my career over my actions, something I had been working toward since I was 16 years old. I lost the trust of just about everyone who knew me. Some close friends didn't want to associate with me anymore. My wife was thinking of leaving, all the things we had worked together for were gone or soon to be lost. I was depressed, felt nothing but guilt and shame; shame by the true sense of the word. I really did believe that I was a bad person and that's why I did bad things. This was the closest time I've ever come to wanting to take my own life.

This wasn't something I could just overcome on my own. The drinking, the lifestyle, behaviors, and mindset all had to change. I had never been as willing to let God into my life as I was at that time. Getting passed my past and onto a path with God wasn't something that happened overnight. It took time, people who loved me, and having an honest open relationship with God. Something I had never had before. God put me on a path of recovery through inpatient and outpatient programs and Alcoholics Anonymous. Through working a strong AA program I have learned how to be honest with other people, open in my feelings, and willing to do the work needed to live a life in sobriety. A happy and full life which God wants me to have. My old self would have wanted to put this past behind me and never think of or mention it again. To try and just go through life as if bad things happen and I am just supposed to try to forget. AA and our Heavenly Father have taught me a better way. We have a saying in AA, "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." I've had

people ask me that if I had the chance go back and do it all over again what would I change? My answer is honestly nothing. I have heard that God enters through wounds, and that is true for me. I am where I am, and who I am because of my past and it is not something I wish to shut the door on. It has been my relationship with God and my program in AA which has allowed God relieve me of all my shortcomings. If I am true to my program, myself, and to God, he allows me to work with other people by sharing my experience and has blessed me with a life in recovery. If God wishes to use my experiences to help another then that is not something I wish to shut the door on.

So when it comes to getting past my past, for me it is done by turning my will and my life over to God. Since I have done this I must say that my relationship with God has only grown stronger and stronger, and God has allowed me to grow closer and closer to his children because of it. I have the strongest relationship I have ever had with my wife and our family. I have people who God has put in my life who I love and who love me. God has blessed my wife and I with the responsibilities of raising our daughter, one who if I continue to stay close to God and work my AA program, will never have to see her father drunk or altered by any kind of substance. I strive to be the type of person like the man who stopped me from getting on that flight. A man who God feels he can use to help the lives of others. My hope is that by giving my past over, God will make me a better Christian Husband, Father, and servant of His.