



LOVE LINK LETTER

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October 2005

"This is My Story"

By Gary S.

I was born in 1968 in Pennsylvania to an Indian mother and an Italian father. Shortly after my birth my parents divorced. I'm not sure why but my brother, sisters and I were placed in foster homes. I don't know about my other siblings but I was placed in a Christian home. My foster parents were members of the Church of Christ. At five years of age I was returned back to the care of my natural mother.

My mother decided to move to Oklahoma where she was from originally. We children were placed in an Indian Boarding School by my mother. This was where I came to learn of my Indian heritage. I hated boarding school and never benefited from it. All I learned was to hate and fight and that led to the end of my boarding school days. After the 9th grade I was expelled and returned to public school, where I was immediately unaccepted. First, because I was Indian and second, because I was poor. I saw myself as an outcast and a trouble maker.

It didn't take long before I was introduced to alcohol and marijuana. At first I didn't much like it but everyone that was cool and everyone I wanted to be friends with were doing it. So I continued on and soon started skipping school so I could get high and drink not even knowing I was being left behind in school while the rest of my classmates were moving on towards finishing their education. Soon after my abuse of chemicals I started getting into trouble with the law, in and out of Juvenile Court for various reasons. I was introduced to the Bible while I was in jail where I tried to get to know God. I found myself only calling out to Him when I was in trouble.

After I turned 18 my mother and step-father kicked me out and felt they didn't have any legal responsibility over me any longer. So at a very young age I started at the bottom on the streets in Oklahoma City. There's nothing on the streets but abuse of some thing or somebody, I soon learned and I did them both. I learned the survival game of how to scrounge for what ever it was I wanted to get. I drank cheap wine, beer, rubbing alcohol, cooking sherry, Listerine mouthwash and huffed paint. I only worked spot labor and only long enough to feed my habits.

When I was around 21 I went to South Dakota with a girlfriend who I later had to break free from. I stayed there but on those streets there wasn't much opportunity for a free ride when you're looking for one. I met a nice woman in a bar and ended up with a companion I liked. She introduced me to the real world of the working society, gave me a place to live, washed my clothes, cooked for me. Soon I was working like everyone else and I turned into a weekend drinker. Eventually, I got a car. I had nice household goods. I was living. Then one day I decided to leave my friend for someone else.

All during this time I had a faith in God. When you're on the streets you learn all about God and all the hymns from the churches and the missions. This was how I learned of faith and God never let me down, He was always and is always there when I need Him. I was just too preoccupied with being a slave to my addiction to realize it. I ended up getting married and moved back to Oklahoma.

At 34 years old after 4 1/2 years of marriage and being sober, while in the process of buying a new home, I decided I wanted out. I wanted to be free to do as I saw fit to do. I left with my pick-up, my tools and some clothes. I slowly got back into being a hardcore alcoholic again. I started to lose trusted friends and their respect. Soon after, I lost jobs and everything that I owned.

I had made one big circle. At 36, I got my third DUI and had to serve some jail time. While I was locked up, I took a long hard look at myself and did a lot of talking with God. I came to the conclusion that I was tired and driving myself to eternal darkness. I told Jesus Christ to help me, take control, You win, I'm Yours. I know I have a big mountain to climb but every day I pray for faith, strength, determination and motivation to over come all obstacles. Since I have put Jesus in the driver seat I am now in a recovery program through Love Link Ministries. This has been a great blessing 'cause I'm not out on the streets where I can be subject to use because of depression and stress. I'm starting to regain stability and hope to soon be able to become a productive citizen. I hope to help people like myself someday because we all deserve a second chance.

I want to thank Love Link Ministries and Pastor Wayne Stark for their valuable support of my recovery. I pray for ministry growth so we can reach out to more people in distress. I have no place to go now but down God's path as He leads.