



## *In Robert's Own Words ...*

**TMEW:** *Why do you want to join our ministry team?*

The Lord has been stirring my spirit, and my pastor, Matt Valencia, at Calvary Chapel Gilroy, asked me to pray about this ministry. As I was praying, I attended the workshop Calvary Chapel Monterey Bay.

At this time I was still waiting on the Lord, even with the “pressure” from my pastor and my potential ministry partner, Jerry. I wasn’t going to commit to this ministry until the Lord answered my prayer for a “Gideon fleece.”

My heart is to go nowhere without the support of my wife, Terry. When God calls one, He will usually call the other as well, or at least turn the heart toward the ministry to get the morale support needed. In my case, God not only changed my wife’s heart — God has put “The Most Excellent Way” in both our hearts.

**TMEW:** *Please share your testimony.*

I am a born again child of God by His grace and mercy. I was “born” a Catholic. I met Jesus at 14, but rebelled and ran away from Him. I converted to Jehovah’s Witness at 18, but I was never trained how to defend myself apologetically — I got sliced, diced, and *Ginsu cheffed* — but I now know the truth. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

During this time I had married (at 19) and due to my ex-wife’s infidelity, I turned to food for comfort and ate my pain. After 13 years, and more deception and debaucheries, she left and I was alone. I didn’t know how to process this

stuff and turned to alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, and debauchery, in addition to food, as a means of escape. I was killing myself and didn’t care.

After losing 50K in a week gambling, I was ready to pull the trigger of my 9mm to end the agony. (Looking back, I know it was the Holy Spirit who did not allow me to pull the trigger. I literally could not pull the trigger — no strength to lift the gun.)

I turned to friends and family for help, moved back home and stopped the substance abuse. I started working out and lost 80 lbs.

I still hadn’t turned to the Lord for I hadn’t completely hit rock bottom. My new “god” was self and the gym. I was able to get to nine percent body fat and a solid 200 lbs. by utilizing high intensity training techniques from an ex-Mr. America, who introduced me to steroids.

One night in January, 1999, I ran into my old friend from high school on the way home from the gym, and we started seeing each other. One thing led to another and we lived together — we married May 22, 1999. By July we were headed for divorce.

In my new “self” made body and mindset, I was going to be super step-dad and save these people from their dysfunctional lifestyle. My wife was a chain smoker, an alcoholic and addicted to crank. She had experienced emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abused — she was lost. (My vices were reduced to alcohol and porn at this point). I had no idea what I had gotten myself into.

## The Most Excellent Way – Testimonies

Terry used all this to mask the pain of abuse and the death of her brother (Crack cocaine OD), and blamed herself for his death. She attempted suicide by trying to drive her bike into the path of a 4x4 truck that miraculously missed her (divine intervention) as I trailed her on my bike. (That truck would have killed us both.) We suffered for the next few months as I slowly eroded and could literally take no more. She was up all hours of the night and I didn't sleep. I decided I was leaving by late September/early October. The enemy did all he could to kill us and break us up. I knew I was in deep and things were out of control. I could no longer live like this. We were going to kill ourselves with alcohol, drugs, or suicide, if we stayed the course.

God won.

One night, as I was telling Terry good-bye, I asked my dad to come over and help me get *all* my stuff. I was not coming back for anything – or so I thought.

When Dad (a Christian for 20+ years) arrived, the Lord moved my heart to ask him to come in and talk with Terry. He talked to her (and me indirectly) about Jesus. After we all prayed, I stayed.

The Lord touched my heart and I cried out to Him on a freeway ramp as I entered the highway on the way to work one morning in October, 1999. For me, I was entering the highway to heaven at that moment as I asked

Jesus to come into my heart and fix this mess. Unbeknownst to me, Terry was doing the same in our bedroom at home.

The Lord reached out and saved us both, and our children (my step children), and plugged us into Calvary Chapel of San Jose. The Lord led us to fellowship in the Married Couples Ministry. Concurrently, the doors opened for us to be discipled by a couple who had been involved in a drug/alcohol ministry at CCSJ – we sat under them for a more than a year. The Lord used them to ground us in the Word, as they instilled in us the importance of God's Word and stressed the need to keep our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, no matter what. Others may fail us, but if we stay fixed on Him He will be our Strength and Sufficiency.

As we grew spiritually, we were more involved in the church. After about three years the Lord stirred our hearts to go to Gilroy and help Pastor Matt at Calvary Chapel in Gilroy.

Pastor Matt, Jerry Patte (an ex-alcoholic), Terry and I want to see people saved, healed and the Lord glorified.

We are all sinners saved by grace for a time such as this, as the Lord uses us as His vessels, for His will, for His Glory. Halleluiah! ■

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