

My name is Jason Pritchard. I grew up in a family where drug distribution was a way of life. I learned early on that marijuana provided the necessary funds for survival. We were very poor, but we did what we had to do in order to survive. I didn't use any drugs until I turned 18. When I turned 18 I began to drink and smoke marijuana. When I was 21 I was involved in two car wrecks within a couple months of each other. The injuries I suffered from the car wrecks led me on a road to pain medications (opioids). I began taking and selling pills at this point and embarked on a 16-year journey into addiction. I also started using amphetamines and cocaine. In 2003, I was placed on Methadone and would take and sell the prescription.

In 2005, I was in full blown addiction and still managed to graduate from Virginia Tech with a degree in Finance. I was what you would call a functioning addict. At one point in 2008 my addiction led me into such a deep depression that I was hospitalized for suicidal thoughts. I would abuse any drug that I could find throughout my 16 years of addiction. In 2010 I met a person that had heard that despite my drug use, I was known as a man who could move large quantities of illicit drugs. We met and discussed a strategy to distribute a large number of pills and a large amount of cocaine. This continued for about two years. I started to have encounters with the police. I was incarcerated on three different occasions. My last incarceration I was sentenced to six years and had to do five. The last time I was incarcerated was March of 2012-March 2017.

I began to read about Jesus at first I was skeptical. I read things like Archeology Versus Christianity and How Could Dinosaurs Have Been on the Arc? I now realize I was being convicted by the Holy Spirit. It wasn't long before I had a bible in my hand studying it as often as possible. I began to see that Jesus had been with me through my whole life hoping I'd decide to let him be part of my life. One night I began to cry and tell Jesus that I was sorry for all my bad decisions I had made in my life and all the sins I had committed against him. That was the day that my life changed, and I became a new creation in Christ. I knew I had to change my thoughts and actions. While incarcerated I took advantage of all the Classes that were provided by Department of Corrections. I completed classes like Nonresidential Drug Abuse Program (100 Hours), Thinking for a Change, Anger Management and 15 different correspondence bible study courses.

I also completed my ministers license program and now I am licensed to preach and teach. My relationship that was developing with my Savior, Jesus the Christ, coupled with these classes changed my whole perspective on life. I now knew my purpose in life. I had been created to allow Jesus to work in me and through me. I was created to be Christ's Ambassador and to preach a message of reconciliation through Jesus the Christ (2nd Cor. 5:17-20). I compiled a list of organizations from the re-entry fairs that help offenders once they returned home. I came home with a very strong faith and a plan to stay out of prison. My plan consisted of locating community organizations to share my story, Living Free faith based recovery meetings, being involved in church and finding a job.

I obtained a job 9 days after my release from incarceration. I worked hard, it wasn't the job I necessarily wanted but I humbled myself thanking God for this opportunity. One year and One week out of incarceration God opened the door for me to get a mortgage to buy a home. I use that blessing to bless others by taking in guys coming out of incarceration who need a stable place to live. I set the expectations

for the guys including employment, recovery classes, church, and community service. I worked the job God provided me 9 days after incarceration for 21 months. I had started applying for jobs that I wasn't sure could even hire me. January 2, 2019 God opened another door and I went to work for Ballad Health, the 9th largest healthcare system in the United States. I became a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) January 31, 2019 with the help of Appalachian Substance Abuse Coalition (ASAC), Highlands Community Services, and Ballad Health. I have seen God use this Job to spread hope to others by allowing me the opportunity to share my testimony of salvation and restoration. I am dedicated to using my testimony to break the stigma of those in recovery or branded with a felony record. I stand before you today as a testimony of 2nd Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." I am now over 7 years in recovery and one thing I know for sure I am a NEW Creation.