



My life began in Newfoundland, Canada, where my father was enlisted in the Navy. We stayed in Canada for two years, and moved to Georgia once his enlistment was complete. Here my mother and father both attended college and my father earned his psychology degree and became an officer in the Air Force. This began our many travels as a family. These travels took us to Mississippi first. Looking back, my time here began my feelings of inadequacy. I was told by my teacher I needed to shape up or ship out. I really wasn't sure what she meant and had no idea what I needed to do to satisfy her demand. Being in a new school and environment, I wasn't sure how to make friends as I have always been shy and unsure of myself. We lived here for almost a year, I gained a sister, my father finished school, and we were re-assigned to Ft. Walton beach, Florida. Being here I remember feeling more accepted and finding friends a little easier, but I still felt incomplete in some way. This is a pattern that was repeated throughout my childhood and adolescence. During this stay I gained another sister. I cried when she was born because I really wanted a brother instead. I have always struggled with realizing the blessings I have been given. Some have been realized through pain and others with time. Our next landing spot was Athens, Ga. This is where I first remember a sense of belonging. I attended middle school, met some good friends, and found my first using buddy. I found myself leaving healthy friendships to pursue the relationships that fed my dishonesty and sneakiness. I found some wholeness in getting away with things. We stayed here until I completed middle school, and then we packed up and headed overseas. We landed in Germany and I remember being overwhelmed and very excited about the "cultural differences". My mother warned me of these differences and the temptation I would face, but I was ready to find out for myself. We first lived in Holland, and the culture was very laid back and I certainly took advantage of it. This is when I remember finding enjoyment in any form of indulgence. I found it easier to find friends and acceptance if I drank or smoked, and this soon became all I really wanted to identify with. We were here in Holland for a year and a half, before having to move to Germany. During these next couple of years I had the opportunity to visit and see a lot of Europe, but every trip was blurred and overshadowed by my desire to drink and smoke. That was my passion and

everything else was secondary. I managed to win awards for academics and sports, earning the respect of my teachers allowing me to feel complete. Believing, if everyone else thought I was doing well, then they must be right. I felt accomplished and was proud of my ability to fool everyone. I graduated High School and came back to Georgia to start college. This was really a move to once again please others. I really had no idea what or who I was other than the faces I put on every day. Still the only thing in life I loved at this point was the thrill and comfort I experienced every time I used. I played Jazz in college, traveling with the band to Chicago and New York, but much like Europe, my first priority was always the next party. My college career continued for about two and a half years. Leaving college I began working full time as a Pharmacy Tech, giving my disease many directions for growth. Living a life governed by fear and using, I left many more "good" jobs before they fired me. This period of life ended with criminal charges and what I thought was my bottom. This chapter began with my definition of sobriety, the lack of my drug of choice. I met the mother of my children, feeling she had filled that gaping whole inside of me, we were married and a short time later my son was born. Marriage and fatherhood soon was not enough, and I had no idea why. My using increased along with the lies and guilt. My family life mirrored that of my childhood and adolescence, living a double life. I knew something was wrong with me but had no idea what, and I was too scared and too ashamed to discuss it with anyone. When my son turned a year old we sold all we owned and headed down to Florida. I felt this was a shot at a new life; a fresh start. I never stopped using. After a couple years here my daughter was born. I had a great job and still managed to function on some level, this was short lived. I was laid off because they were too kind to fire me. This allowed me to tell another lie and place blame elsewhere. We moved back to Georgia with the promise of regular employment. During this stint in Georgia I began using intravenously to save money. Within six months I was fired, divorced and homeless. I purchased a Greyhound ticket to Florida in an effort to run from my problems, never realizing my biggest problem went everywhere I went. Three days after my arrival, I landed a spot in the county jail for the better part of a year. I immediately began using again and continued my downward spiral. This carried on four more years leaving me completely hopeless, homeless again, and seeing the only way out as suicide. As a last ditch effort I called my sister and she was willing to help. My sister had moved to Dublin in 2010 to seek treatment, and was now clean. I managed to continue using and was completely miserable. Again contemplating suicide I lied in bed on a lone night and prayed. I asked God to please give me a sign if He was real. This was the first time I had prayed in a very long time. The next morning in church a man walked to me, to let me know God had a word for me. He told me God wanted to let me know that He is real and I can trust Him. The preacher also gave the message that he felt this was going to be a year of Hope. This alone wasn't enough for me to stop using. My sister knew the only option for me was to go on to the bitter end, or enter an inpatient treatment. In a last ditch effort to avoid treatment, my sister dropped me off at a local NA meeting. I had to find a ride home and so I did. There were a lot of people in attendance, but at this point God moved me to a married couple that He had chosen to be his shepherds. Roughly a week later my sister dropped me off at Promise of Hope. I walked in scared and having no idea what to expect. I entered the office, and was greeted by the same two that gave me a ride home. While at Promise of Hope I began learning of God's will, and that I have a disease. They have taught me that my disease lives between my ears, have further given me the tools to recognize when it is active and how to treat it. While being here Honesty, Open-Mindedness, and Willingness have been taught as essentials for recovery. Through this process I have received grace, understanding, and love. This has given me a

way of living based on spiritual principles, and striving to do the next right thing. While at Promise of Hope, I have been groomed for a life of recovery, and have witnessed strength and courage through my humility and my surrender. My children now have a father, my mother has a son, and my sisters have a brother. Life is good!

Truly Blessed, and Forever Grateful;

Jeremy Cole