

Gospel Gazette

Salt Lake City Mission, P.O. Box 142, Salt Lake City, UT 84110 - Phone 801-355-6310

April 2009

Drive On

When I was a child, I had dreams, nightmares of being in the back seat of our old Chevy station wagon. Growing up, we had great times in that car as a family, but when I was dreaming the car seemed to be out of control. It seems the dreams started when I was seven or eight years old but continued on into my teens, even my twenties at times.



I didn't have these nightmares often but when I did it left me feeling helpless. In my dream I remember always being in the back seat with no one else in the car. The car appeared to be going down a steep hill and I felt as if it was going to slam into a wall or tree if I didn't do something. But no matter how hard I tried I could not make it up to the front seat. So the dreams continued.

I grew up with my mother, sister and brother. We were not wealthy but mom always made sure we had enough. I loved sports, art, music, etc. In fact I aspired to be a baseball player, artist or architect. As a young man things seemed to be heading in that direction, but when I became a teenager there was a new world available. Still, I had the dreams from time to time.

Attending bigger schools with more choices, having access to a car took my friends and I far away where anything could happen. As a child I swore I would never drink alcohol because my dad was an alcoholic. When he drank, he became someone else, neglectful, angry, abusive, distant.

Although I swore, I would never drink by the age of 13 I was drinking with my friends. For some reason I believed I was different from my father and would never allow alcohol to change me. By the age of 14 marijuana came into our circle. I resisted for about a year because I had seen what it did to some of my family and friends. Then one day I tried just a little. Little was too much!

After that, the flood gates were open and I was drinking and getting high at parties or even by myself. I slowly began to lose my desire to play sports, draw, paint, all of my childhood dreams seemed to be of less importance until finally I quit the high school baseball team, dropped out of school and began working menial jobs just to get by. The dreams increased.

I met the love of my life at 21 and we had a little girl. Before our child's birth we both drank together. However, after the baby my wife decided our daughter was top priority. I continued to move in the wrong direction. Gradually my life turned away from my family and toward others who partied. I had little or no any direction.

Holding a job became very difficult. I began selling pot or stealing for money to get high. It wasn't long after that I was getting into trouble with the law. Finally, it led to me being incarcerated for a while to wake me up. My irresponsibility and selfishness caught up with me. The dreams moved into my waking hours at times and I couldn't seem to grab the steering wheel, find the brake or even sit up in the seat.

I remember laying in a tiny jail cell praying, "God either kill me or fix me!" Nothing happened over night. I continued to have the dreams, when awake my heart would beat so rapidly I thought it was going to explode. I had lied to my family so much they could not trust me.

I remember watching a Billy Graham Crusade when I was eight years old and I fell to my knees and asked God to forgive me. Twenty years later here I was again on my knees begging for forgiveness and help. Slowly I felt more and more peace, forgiveness and confidence. I went back to school, then college.

The Lord led me to fellow believers and we encouraged each other in God's promises found in the Bible. I remember a Christmas being locked up and it was the best I had ever experience. For the first

time I knew the true meaning of why we celebrate Christmas any way. Because God came to us, when we couldn't get to Him.

After my release I was ready to be a real husband, father and servant of the Most High God. But it only happened because God drew me close through His word, a great church family and a personal relationship with Him in which I could share my victories, failures, ups and downs. God has remained faithful.

I continued my studies, working, etc., I met two gentlemen that spoke of a mission outreach to those in need. I was attending the U of U majoring in counseling, but my heart was in ministering to individuals that had been through similar experiences to mine. They invited me to visit the Salt Lake City Mission and it grew on me quickly. My heart made a connecting with the people and I started praying for everyone I could think of at the mission. A year later I joined the staff as the Program Director. I've enjoyed being here the last 10 years, through many challenges, great victories and great tests of faith

By the way, the nightmares stopped when I let Jesus drive the car.

Letter to Mrs. Bixby

In the fall of 1864, Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrews wrote to President Lincoln asking him to express condolences to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, a widow who was believed to have lost five sons during the Civil War. Lincoln's letter to her was printed by the Boston Evening Transcript. Later it was revealed that only two of Mrs. Bixby's five sons died in battle (Charles and Oliver). One deserted the army, one was honorably discharged, and the other deserted or died a prisoner of war.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.



Dear Madam,--

I have been shown in the files of the *Lincoln* War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and the lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the alter of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln

A Matter of Stewardship

Mother Teresa was once asked the job description for someone who wanted to work along side her in the grimy streets of Calcutta. She said, with out hesitation, it takes two things: Hard work and a joyful attitude.

Today we find many who are hard working, even going the extra mile to complete projects in record time. But to season hard work with a joyful attitude is becoming more and more rare.

Here are some steps that can help us keep joy in our work.

1. Laugh at how crazy things get sometimes. Proverbs 17:22 tells us laughter is good like medicine. Having a sense of humor can diffuse stress and tension.



2. Be thankful for what you do have. Many times our joy is lacking because we are focused on the negatives, the effort and the pain. Count the blessing we do have and be patient.

3. Do everything with God in mind. When we consider we are not all there is, that there is one who picks up the pieces and completes the things we can't we will find peace in recognizing we have help beyond our limited resources and control.

Ways You Can Help:

Clothing Drives
Personal Hygiene Kit Collection
Non-perishable Food Item Drive
Monetary Fund-raises
Yard Sales
Be Creative Have Fun!!

Call Philip Arena@ 801.355.6310 For More

We want to take this opportunity to address a matter of deep spiritual significance: Christian Estate Planning.

If stewardship is “human responsibility to manage resources God has placed in one’s care,” then we really don’t “own” anything - not our time, our talents, our abilities, or our money. God is the owner; we’re His managers. Only by His grace do we have anything. He trust us to manage His resources in a way that furthers His kingdom. When we fall for the temptations of the world and become poor managers, we disappoint God.

At its core, Christian Estate Planning is unique and distinct because it is a spiritual, not a tax-bases decision. Yet, the vast majority of estate planning done in America, and even among Christians, is driven by tax avoidance, inheritance and financial products, not by stewardship.

Certainly, we should be wise as serpents. Yes, we should maximize available tax benefits, but at the end of the day, we will be held accountable for how we steward what He has given us.

Too often, Christian ministries have been passed over when it comes to estate gifts. Despite the fact that many supporters may have made regular and generous gifts for many years, they are more likely to leave their estates to their college alma mater or worse yet, the federal government, than to their favored ministries.

Salt Lake city Mission offers a comprehensive program of estate stewardship information estate planning support. Please visit the Christian Estate Planning section of our web site at www.saltlakecitymission.org

Salt Lake City Mission encourages and accepts gifts through Christian estate planning that will be used to extend our programs and ministries beyond what is now possible because of current budget limitations. You may either endow your gift (a perpetual fund) or designate that it be used immediately for one of the ministry’s priorities.

I urge you to prayerfully consider how the Holy Spirit is leading you to update your estate plan (or establish one for the first time) and consider a gift to Salt Lake City Mission in the gift portion of your plan.

Please contact Philip Arena @ 801.355.6310 for more information on Planned Giving.