

He's the only hope

My name is James Lemon. I was born in Montebello, California on 6/16/1955 at 10:10 am to Keith and Joyce Lemon. I have to say, I had a normal upbringing in Southern California. I attended public school and grew up with my 2 younger brothers, Grant and Paul. We lived in several different towns but they were all over Southern California.



I was attending 6th grade when I was introduced to marijuana by my best friend and his older brother, but I didn't smoke it. Instead, I wanted to watch them and see how they reacted to the drug. I saw several movies about marijuana, like "Reefer Madness." Those movies were a big lie. So, I decided to try it after watching my best friend smoke it for a year. My first joint was dipped in liquid opium. Needless to say I got really stoned my first time smoking pot and I like it.

I was very active in sports in Junior High School, but I never made the varsity squads because I was from the poor side of the tracks and I wasn't from a wealth family. The rich kids were snobs and didn't have anything to do with the poor kids. I was good enough to play all the varsity sports, but I wasn't accepted by the rich kids so I decided to look for group of people that would accept me for the person I was. The group I became involved with was the "partiers" and the drug users. They accepted anyone and social status meant nothing to them. I was raised in a Mormon home and there were only two other Mormon kids in the entire Junior High School. All the kids were Catholic and so that made me a social outcast. I went on experimenting with other drug all thru junior high. I got into some trouble with a young lady and drugs then I was put on probation.

The next part of my story is so very hard to say because of the group of people involved. With that being said, my intent is *not* to offend anyone or cause others to believe that I'm attacking in any way. I just need to be able to tell my story, honestly and transparently because these events have haunted me all my life until now. After I had gotten into trouble and on probation. We went to court. It was there that my and my families fates were decided. My parents were declared unfit parents and I was declared incorrigible and sent to a Mormon Boys Ranch in Birdseye, Utah. My brother, Grant was sent to live with my uncle. Only my brother, Paul was allowed to stay with my parents. All these decisions were made by the bishop of the church. To this day, I believe that he was responsible for splitting my family apart and the decisions regarding my future for the next 2 years or until I turned 18.

Thankfully, he was eventually excommunicated for the decisions he made regarding me and my family. Nonetheless, the wheels were in motion for me to spend the next 2 ½ years at the Boys Ranch and then the church let me go back to my parents in California. At every turn, the church was there making the decisions regarding whether or not I could live with my parents or remain at the Boys Ranch. We were helpless in their hands.

One good outcome to my situation was being a straight A student during my time at the Boys Ranch and athlete of the year for 2 straight years. But when I got back to California, I went back to the party life which was the only life style I really knew. It was kind of strange. Everyone I knew used drugs and I'm sure the enemy steered me to all the drug dealers because I ended up dealing drugs for most of my life. No matter where I moved, the dealers were always the first people I met. Time went on and the search for what I was looking for continued. I spent a lot of time drinking as well but I preferred drugs over booze most of the time. I was searching for something, but I had no idea what that something was. I know now that drugs and partying wasn't the answer.

Later I met some Christian people at a Jesus freak rally back in the 70's at the Azusa Street movement and I went with some Christians to Downey California on 2/12/1972. I received Jesus Christ as my Savior, even though I didn't have any idea what I had done. When they laid hands on me, I freaked out. It was like they were trying to tell me they were God or something. I went back to the life I knew, but I knew something had changed. I didn't know what had changed, but I knew that it was something big. I was out of high school and living in Utah again and having a hard time finding a good job. So, I went into management training for Skaggs's Drug stores. I had several promotions, two in Colorado, and I got married to a Utah Woman that had followed me to Colorado with her 1 year old daughter. So, I had an instant family at marriage. The marriage lasted 5 years and the sweet woman I thought I had married turned out to be a prescription drug addict and a heavy drinker. I really didn't find this out until the last couple years of the marriage.

After the marriage ended and I was promoted to Drug Store Manager in San Leandro, California, that's when my life really changed. I was a drug store manager during the day and a cocaine dealer at night. I was living a total oxymoron life style. I was free basing about \$1000 of coke a day, not counting what I snorted during the day, just to keep my drug habit in check till I got off work. It was probably another gram or two a day. I knew I was in big trouble and I needed some professional help but I really didn't know where to go. My drug habit became unmanageable and I had to leave the drug store business. Truthfully, I was a cocaine addict with no money. I needed treatment in the worst way. So, my girlfriend and I decided to move to Santa Maria where I became a serious about getting to know God.

On Easter Sunday I moved out from living with my girlfriend I told her I couldn't live this way anymore. The change in my life was coming and the Lord was calling me. I was watching T.V. and the Holy Spirit came over me and that was it. I received the Lord for real and was healed from my drug addiction from that minute on. I later spent 2 ½ years at Fuller Seminary because I thought that I was called to be a pastor. But, I guess the timing wasn't God's timing because I was out still out of money. So, I accepted a job as Regional Sales Manager in Bakersfield, California for Brach's Candy. At the same time, I took on a position as youth pastor at Vineyards Christian fellowship for 2 years. Unfortunately, the next two job positions began and ended so I started my own Commercial Belgian waffle company. Later, I had a large sum of money stolen from me and had my business closed by the F.B.I and Heartland Food Company for "breach of contract."

After all that was said and done I was still looking for some closure to the longing in my heart for what God had for me. All I knew was the life working in the private sector and working part time for the Lord wasn't meeting my needs and I wasn't happy so it was time to keep searching. I had looked for other work in California but the economy in California was bad and I came back to Utah. I had always felt that Utah had something for me and I had always wanted to tell my story about what the bishop had done to me and my family. So, here I am at the Salt Lake City Mission. I have no real idea what God has for me, but I'm His now and

waiting to see what God does. I'm doing a lot of searching as I'm trying to stay humble and pray. I truly believe God is faithful even if I'm not most of the time. I need to allow the Lord to take total control and just trust and believe that he has something special for my future here on earth.

Looking back at my life I was very angry with the church for pulling my family apart. The Lord has dealt with me about this subject and showed me I needed to just forgive them and just love them so I can move on with my life. Now I can finally say with the help of the Lord, I've been clean from drugs and booze for almost 40 years. Thank you, Lord for truly loving me enough to not give up on me. I'll be walking with you until you come back, but please keep working on me, I still have a long way to go in my relationship with You and I can't do anything without You and Your help. Thank you, Lord for being the last and only hope for this world.

During this time of refreshing of my relationship the Lord, I believe He is revealing many things to me. One revelation is a big reason the Lord had me move back to Utah. He said to try once again to lead my family to Jesus and a personal relationship with Him. I also believe the Lord has some type of ministry for me with the Mormon people here in Utah. I don't know how, but these are clear messages from Him that I need to do. I truly thank God He's faithful to us all. For me in particular, He gave me a favorite saying, "My heart is a stone and He's chipping away." It's time to keep pressing into Jesus. We all need Jesus more now than ever! He's the only hope this world has. May the Lord bless you all. In His love,

— James Lemon.

"MY LIGHT IS YOUR FLAME"

As I stand clothed by Your presence,
I feel my light shining bright with Your flame.
As my light shines out to those who wish to see,
Your flame beacons those around me to know You
through me.
Through sadness and pain, through conflict and strife
They see me lifted up by You as You take these things
away.
They see You wipe my tears and dry my eyes,
As I thank You for making things right
Through joy and happiness, love and faith,
I thank You each day that I feel these things.
My light tells others of Your Glory and Grace,
Your flame tells others they can feel the same way.
When knowledge or understanding escapes me,
They see me seek You that I might find the way
Because only through You can I find the way
Your flame guides me through the path You have paved
I only pray my light shines bright enough with Your
flame,
To light others and light them with Your flame.

~By Rachel Vaughan

A Matter of Stewardship

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 trusts 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 favorite 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.

God Bless You! Please contact Brad Jaques Or Steve Larsson @ 801-355-6310 for more information on Planned Giving.

We do hope that you will take advantage of this service, and let us offer a blessing to you and your family.