

redeemed²repeat^{INC.}

THE GAMECHANGER NEWSLETTER

JASON'S STORY

My name is Jason Bower and I am 44 years old. I have struggled with addiction since I was twelve years old. My father left when I was around four. He was a soldier in the Vietnam War and came back a changed person, as people tend to do in war. This is where the battle began for me. Dad was in and out of our lives for a couple of years and then out altogether. It was confusing and although I didn't recognize it at the time, made me sad and angry.

My mom remarried when I was nine and we moved to East Mesa. We saw the extended family less and less and the support system that I had known my entire life was gone. We also changed churches and began attending a small church with no real youth program. It was behind the church that I was introduced to marijuana. I didn't try it right off but my curiosity got the best of me. I had often asked myself, "I wonder what it's like to be out of control of my mind, my senses, to be high?"

I WANTED MY FAMILY BUT I NEEDED THE DRUGS.

Upon my first experience with being stoned, I fell in love. I didn't die, go to jail, or become homeless. The warnings that I'd heard were lies ... or so I thought.

This went on for a couple of years, then one summer I went to church camp. Along with clothes, sleeping bag etc. I also brought weed. During one of the last services I accepted Christ and for the first time in my life, felt that I was free. I felt new, clean. I found myself wanting to know more about God. I stood before the church and testified about how Christ had come into my life and delivered me from smoking pot. Everyone seemed happy for me, except for my parents. When we got home I learned why. My step dad proceeded to scream about how I was an embarrassment to the family and the contempt I felt from him was overwhelming. I continued to experience physical and verbal abuse from my stepfather. I finally gave up and returned to the thing that promised relief. During this time I didn't receive discipleship of any kind. I see now that I needed it.

I began to experiment with other drugs and give in to other sinful desires as well. The lies and getting into trouble finally caught up with me and on my 18th birthday my mom told

me that I was going into a program or I was leaving the house. That program was Teen Challenge and I entered on October 4, 1989. After the initial shock wore off I began to try to do what they said. I learned Scripture, I praised God and had some great experiences. It was in Teen Challenge that I met Liz Ramsey (the founder and visionary of R2R).

MY OUTSIDE FINALLY MATCHED THE INSIDE: DIRTY, WOUNDED AND COMPLETELY LOST.

After Teen Challenge, I got a job, joined a local church and got married. Soon after, we were expecting our first child. **Nothing prepared me for the challenges that come with the birth of a child.** As I began to feel the pressures of life, instead of taking them to Christ and allowing Him to bear them I let them destroy me. After 2 1/2 years of not using, I returned to the familiar.

Things went bad pretty fast and I went into the restoration phase of Teen Challenge. After completing I'm not sure how long passed, but it all began again. **Why couldn't I stop?** Did I not love Jesus enough? Wasn't He interested in me? Was I a disappointment and not worth the time? Maybe if I just talked more to people or just tried to be stronger? I had not one answer. My wife finally told me it was either drugs or family. I wanted my family but I needed the drugs.

I remember thinking that I could be a drug dealer, make it big and get my family back. I thought if I could provide the physical needs it would outweigh my other deficiencies. **Within three months I went through all the drugs, had no friends, nowhere to go and spent my first night homeless.**

After ten years wandering to various states, multiple rehabs, failed relationships, homelessness, living in a tent and even a cave, my addiction took me to hopelessness and despair. My outside finally matched the inside: dirty, wounded and completely lost.

I decided to enter the Salvation Army in Phoenix so my children could be a part of my recovery. At six weeks in, I went to an AA meeting and saw a face I had seen somewhere before. He was getting his ten year chip. I couldn't believe it. It was Greg, a man I went through Teen Challenge with in 1989 and here it was 2005. This was a meeting ordained by God. Greg became my AA sponsor and I began the process of working the 12 steps.

I made a decision to trust God and put myself under the

authority of this man. It became clear pretty quickly that I was a mess and I had created a lot of damage along the way. I didn't do everything perfectly but I was determined to stay sober. It had become life or death for me. I discovered I liked the meetings and liked what the process was doing for me. I learned that I was powerless over addiction and needed help in order to recover.

Four years into my sobriety, I met Angel and we began living together. A couple years later we were married. She was not a Christian but she loved me and treated me with respect and dignity that I never had before. We began building our lives together. Staying sober was easy and rarely did I think of being high.

Although addiction seemed to be conquered, other transgressions had crept back in. Something was missing. I felt far from God. I thought if I prayed more or changed the behaviors that haunted me since childhood I could get closer to God. **What did I have to do?**

About this time I had reconnected with an old friend, Liz Ramsey Beck. She told me of a group she had started. It was a weekly meeting called Redeemed2Repeat. Liz talked about the transforming power of Jesus Christ. I said "yes, yes but you need the 12 steps and meetings and..." The list went on. Six months or so went by and Liz as well as Greg invited me to church, discipleship classes, etc. I liked the R2R meeting but I wasn't buying all that they were

selling. I was ready to say, "Look, I just don't believe you have the answers that people need and I don't like spending my Sundays at church." Then something miraculous happened.

Angel and I began attending a marriage class that Greg and his wife were leading. The third week my wife raised her hand and said, "Hey I have never been to church. How do I pray to help my marriage?" That night Angel accepted Christ. As we said the sinner's prayer together, I cannot explain



what happened. I experienced transforming power as never before. Something changed in both of us.

The last three months have been life-changing. I fell in love with the Word of God where before I could hardly make myself read. The fire that I had years ago has been ignited once again. My life is being transformed. I have fallen in love with my Redeemer and

am beginning to understand what God has been doing to prepare me for all these years! God used this ministry to help me have a deeper understanding of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I truly believe that I am called to serve in leadership within Redeemed2Repeat. I now understand the vision and purpose of R2R and know that real hope and lasting change only comes through Jesus!

<<< Redeemed to Repeat >>>

read Jason's story in its entirety: redeemed2repeat.org/jason.pdf

 **MINISTRYUPDATE** *from* Liz Beck Director
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The work that God has done in Jason's life and in his family is miraculous! It has been a complete joy to witness the transformation. Jason's passion for the Lord and his desire to help others is exactly what R2R is about.

There are exciting things happening and 2015 is shaping up to be a year of much growth. We are now beginning to see people who have received help to "repeat" in the lives of others. One of the ladies who began her journey of sobriety at the same time that our weekly meeting began has 9 months clean. She just starting meeting weekly with another lady who recently relapsed. They are going through a relapse workbook together and God is already using the tools in this book to bring new understanding to the struggle of addiction. **What an encouragement**

to see people who have experienced freedom now reaching out and bringing hope to others!

This week we begin training a couple from Trinity Bible Church in Phoenix who will be leading a Crossroads meeting at their church in the near future. Expansion is well under way!

Thank you for your faithful partnership in prayer and giving. **This ministry would not be possible without you!** Please continue to pray for wisdom, equipping and more people to serve. I desperately need your prayers as God leads me and stretches me beyond my abilities. I am thankful for the promise that my sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3).

I hope to see you on April 17th for our fundraising event! We are believing

that through this event we will not only raise much needed funds, but also awareness of this ministry so that many more people will receive the help, hope and tools that they need.

If you are unable to join us, please consider a monthly or one-time gift to help us raise our annual budget of \$41,500. This will enable us to continue expansion of the various programs that are being developed.

In just fifteen short months, God has done amazing things and people are being changed. I know I am not the same. I am incredibly humbled by the many people who serve and give to R2R. You are making a difference for eternity!

Thank you for being a "Game Changer!"