

from

UNDER IT

to

GETTING OVER IT

Repentance, Forgiveness, Life



If I could you can, because He helps

BAD THINGS HAPPENED

My life started with some disadvantages. Most lives do. Day-to-day life was hard but I didn't know anything different so I muddled along like everyone else. Life was dull and was as unfair as anything you can think of.

The details of how it began aren't important but you should hear how it ended! My life got repaired and made better than before! If you want repair in your life, keep reading.

The black strip on the next page represents pain that came with The Bad Stuff. Touch it, rub it carefully. It's a mean piece of stuff, isn't it! Pain was in my head and in my gut. I was mad at the world and everybody in it and I thought they were mad at me. I wanted to get even, and was afraid, discouraged, and depressed. Anger was eating me up.

I wanted people to think of me as strong—able to take care of myself—so I tried to cover up the pain with activity. I wanted them to envy me.

THE PAIN FELT LIKE THIS

Strip of gritty stair tread

Most of the pain was in my head but I could feel my belly knot up when I thought about certain people and especially when I thought of the Bad Stuff in my life. I decided to stay busy with good times so pain couldn't hang on me if it tried to. I'd show it! So . . .

I chased power, money, fame, revenge.

I used booze, drugs, sex, people.

I gamble, partied, fought.

I lied, cheated, stole, pretended.

I tried to be Mr. Big but I felt like a runt.

Okay, not *all* of those, but too many. Some helped a little bit for a little while but pain kept coming back so I'd do more or try a new thing. Are *your* mistakes listed? Yes. Underline them.

I MADE A NEW PLAN

Nothing I tried fixed the old pains well enough and some of the things I did just made more new pain. Good spells didn't last long enough. I was one hurting unit. Pain inside wouldn't ease up or go away. It was there all the time. Then I had an idea that seemed good at the time—I would only do what gave me the most fun. My pain would be under the pleasure and get choked to death by all the fun I was having. It would be covered up by the good times.



THE PROBLEM WITH THE NEW PLAN

The pain was still there. Rub the patch on the other page. You can still feel the pain even when it is under the wild and crazy stuff I did to hide it. And who felt the pain? Me, of course.

Cover-ups don't work. I felt angry, afraid, hopeless, dead or dying, worthless, and dumb, but I was clue-vacant what to do next. Time went by slow. I dragged myself through each day like it was hell on earth, which it really for sure was.

The only thing I could figure out to do was to do more of what I had done—to double down as they say. All I learned from that, was that even if they all say it, that don't make it true. Double down and hair of the dog—stuff like that which you hear all over the place is a crock, even if it has a fancy lid and gold trimming.

Then I heard a guy on TV talk about Inner Man Power (IMP) and how to put your IMP to work to solve your problems. It was bull-roney! My IMP was AWOL or dead. Still no hope for my future.

A DOCTOR HAD BAD NEWS

The pain was still there. I was doing day labor when I passed out. They rushed me to the ER and somebody cut something out of me. After five days they let me go. I got on disability and I was like a goat in clover. Lucky me, I thought, repaired, free money, happiness here I come!



That was just another busted fantasy. Life was no better than before. My body was fixed but my spirit crumbled. I got fat, lazy, and bored from lying around and not working, an awful bad combination. I was sick at heart. My live-in girlfriends never stayed long. They all said I was moody and irritable. What did they know?

A DIFFERENT DOC HAD A BETTER IDEA

I had no idea what to do next. God had mercy. He had a plan. He helped me find the kind of help I needed. I had heard some things about God before, but I never took it seriously. Was it even true?

This other doc looked me straight in the eyes as he said, "You know that the way you're living now will kill you pretty soon, don't you?" I said, "Sure, I know that" and he said "Are you ready to go?" so I said, "Might as well."

Then he asked me, "When you go, where are you going?" to which I says "To hell, I guess." He says, "Heaven and hell are Christian beliefs. Have you ever experienced God's love?" "No, I say, just lots of experience with hell on earth."

What he said next surprised me. "Who are you mad at?" That shut me down and he said more, "You're sick and tired of being sick and tired and mad 'cause it keeps going on. Are you ready to begin what you've been looking for?" Hmm . . .

I'M SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?

Nothing I tried worked. I was sick in head and heart, not crazy-tired of life, scared of what might come next. Then, lucky me, I met a guy who talked straight-up sense. Even about God.

He said that when we are hurt, human nature wants revenge, which will bring a ton of trouble if we don't get help. The best help is from Jesus who has perfect wisdom. His help: 1. Comes from total love for you. 2. Does not manipulate. 3. Is not selfish. 4. Has power. 5. Works. 6. Is free. All told, IT'S A BIG TIME GOOD DEAL! Why not go after it? But I didn't know how.

I described the Bad Stuff. He said I needed to repent of my anger about that plus my other sins. Repent? That's to be honest-to-God sorry and determined to not repeat it. Repenting would begin my healing. I repented of a thousand things every day and asked Jesus to forgive me for all of it, which he did, I know he did, because now I'm getting better—some more every day.

FORGIVENESS

God wants you free! He does his part when you do yours. Are you ready? Your part is belief in Christ and sincere regret about what you have done with desire to not do it again. Make amends. Not easy but usually necessary.



Red represents the blood of Christ and the sacrifice he made for you. His death and resurrection cover your sins and pain. His love is bigger than your life!

A PRAYER OF THANKS

God Above All, you have all power and wisdom yet graciously forgive me. Thank you! You call me to dismiss envy, anger, and strife toward all who hurt me. I will, as Jesus did. Amen

FORGIVING

Forgiveness is what we receive; *forgiving* is what we do, or should do if we haven't. Dying on the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

No one has been treated as unfairly as Jesus. Instead of brooding, you must forgive those who hurt you. They don't deserve it? Neither do you or me. Until you do, your life will be full of chaos. But you must. Follow these steps:

1. Want to forgive. Pray to want to if you must.
2. Forgive. If you mean it, say it aloud to God.
3. Ask God about talking with them. He may say "yes"; he may say "no"; he may say "later."
4. Let go of it. When Satan puts it in your mind, kick it out and him with it. It's done; celebrate!

A PRAYER ABOUT FORGIVING

Heavenly Father, you promised to help. I need it now to forgive (name). I don't want to. Show me how to think and do right; to be more like Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen

REWARDS OF REPENTANCE

1. Restores your relationship with God.
2. Removes trash clogging your “phone” to God.
3. Allows facing people without worry of being labeled wretched. You easily keep your head up.
4. Accepted by God and unafraid of rejection by people, you start living with joy and optimism.
5. You trade  for 
the Fighting Fist the Friendly Fist Bump

This becomes your new normal. None of it is automatic. The new journey has obstacles and detours but with the perfect companion (Jesus) and guide (the Spirit) you keep the vision, daring to go on. Life is not easier but you get stronger.

A PRAYER ABOUT MOVING FORWARD

Great God in heaven, I am in awe of you. You do what I cannot. I will follow Jesus' example and teaching to love and forgive those who have wounded me. In Jesus' name I ask that you guide and teach me. Amen

We are glad you have this and pray that you will understand how God can heal old wounds and make the future part of your life better than you can imagine it to be! It will help you learn more to talk with a pastor or chaplain who knows and believes all the Bible teaches about God's love. God is ready to help you learn how to live in a way that will bring peace into your heart.

Talk to a pastor or chaplain today.

This was developed by the nonprofit Center for Bold Action,
innovator of ministry materials.

Visit www.centerforboldaction.org