

It was Spring 1987, and I was going to graduate from high school. I received a letter from a Christian college and as I looked at it, I knew it was where I was supposed to go. This was my calling. But, the thoughts in my mind told me other things, "You will never make money that way! And, you will not go far!"

So, I made up my mind to go into the military. "A young man can start making good money there," I thought. And so I joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves. Little did I know the price I would pay for this decision.

In the summer, after graduating high school, I went to Boot Camp at Parris Island South Carolina.

After Boot Camp and further training, I came home and began to have dreams; they were very vivid and would wake me up. It was always the same message, "if you go now I will..." I would wake from these dreams always with the same question, "Go where Lord?" I had forgotten that God had a purpose for my life and a plan. Now when I think back, I recall Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

In 1990 I was called up to serve in Desert Storm. I remember the words of my recruiter, "It has to be World War Three before they call up the reserves." World War Three it was not, but it was Desert Storm.

I was now driving a truck and carrying my M-16 Rifle. I lived in fox holes and I was on the front lines. I even went on the main assault when we liberated Kuwait.

As most recall, the invasion of Kuwait did not take long. Our unit found ourselves as an occupying force living in the City of Kuwait's garbage dump. It wasn't all bad. And after three months I was back home thinking I made it unscathed.

Unfortunately, not all scars are visible. A short few months after coming home, I was checked into the Veteran's Hospital. I was having dreams again, but they were much different than the ones before.

I found myself having a hard time holding on to a job. I soon realized that I would not be able to support myself. And not too unlike the "Prodigal son" I went home to live with my parents in Florida.

Things got even worse, at least mentally. I started hearing voices telling me, "I hate you." And much worse. It was a dark time in my life.

Occasionally though I would hear a voice that would encourage me: "You are the apple of my eye." And one day a promise: "Many children will believe in Me by you." This was when things looked the worst in my life. I could hardly get out bed, and I wondered, "How could this be?"

In 2012, I was reading my Bible and I noticed a verse. It was James 1:2, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

I stopped there and I asked myself, "Have I thanked God for what I am going through? Have I been joyful?" The only answer was "NO." I wanted to hold on to my hurt. After all, was I not entitled? After thinking about it. I prayed and thanked God in spite of my feelings.

Not long after that I was assigned a new doctor. She tried a new medicine and it worked almost immediately. I went to my Mom and could barely get the words out, "The Storm has ended."

After my storm I decided to finish my accounting degree. I had little experience in the field, and I hadn't worked since 2007 and it was now 2012. So I thought I would volunteer for a Christian organization that needed an accountant.

I soon found one in need. It was CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship). I really did not know what they did until one day I asked a staff member. I was informed that "we go into public schools and teach Good News Clubs." Upon hearing this I decided to get involved in one of these Good News Clubs.

I started just sitting with the children and progressed from there. After some time, I got to teach a Bible lesson, a Gospel lesson. This day was the moment

I realized what I wanted and what

I should be doing. And that is leading children to Christ.

I have since become a local director with CEF in the Buffalo, New York Area. And God has been working His plan in me every day since.

- Brian Ide