WRONG KIND OF SINNER

A Testimony

Introduction

I was called to preach at fourteen years old.

I ran from that altar and didn't stop running for thirty-four years. What finally cornered me wasn't lightning or a vision. It was a cell. Twenty-three hours a day locked inside. One hour to shower, make a call, and decompress. The only book allowed was a Bible.

I read it three times that year. Then seven. Not because I was holy — because I had nothing else to do and nowhere else to run.

In that cell, God didn't tell me I was good. He showed me what I had become: a pile of worthlessness I had created of myself. A sexual addict who had destroyed marriages, abandoned children, and landed in prison with a felony and a registry. I was the wrong kind of sinner. The kind the church doesn't know what to do with. The kind they tell to come late and leave early.

But in that cell, God also showed me something else. He showed me who He is. And He told me I was His.

This book is for the ones who think they're too far gone. The ones sitting in a pew, hiding a screen. The ones in a prison cell with no address to go home to. The ones the church has labeled wrong.

I'm here to tell you: there is no wrong kind of sinner. There is more grace in the blood of Jesus than sin in you. God heals anyone who wants to be healed — but He does it His way.

Your way doesn't work. I know. I tried mine for three decades.

His way worked. And it started when He put me in a box and said, "I've got you where I can deal with you now. You can't run."

For more resources — including music, devotionals, Bible studies, and a free PDF of this book — visit **www.wrongkindofsinner.com**.

Part One: The Runaway

1970s–2016

Chapter 1: The Bad Kid

Before the altar, before the call, before the running — there was just a boy. And by every measure that mattered to the world around him, that boy was bad.

I grew up in the late seventies and early eighties, and growing up meant feast or famine. Not metaphorically. Literally. My father hurt his back and was unable to work for a long stretch. My mother was a waitress at Sambo's — a restaurant chain sort of like Denny's and Waffle House combined. She worked hard, but a waitress's paycheck doesn't go far with a house full of kids. So we learned to survive on what we could afford, and what we could afford was whatever came in dented cans with missing labels, sold at a discount because nobody else wanted them.

Dinner became a game. You'd pick a can from the pantry, open it, and that was your side dish. You never knew what you were going to get. Cherry pie filling. Dog food. Cranberry sauce. Canned peaches. Ravioli. It was a gamble every night. I don't remember ever asking, "Do I have to eat this?" I only remember asking, "Is there more?"

We didn't really think about being poor. Not at home, anyway. But school was different.

I wore secondhand clothes. Wrangler or Rustler jeans in an era where Jordache and Levi's were the standard. Off-brand shoes when everyone else had Nikes. Kids notice those things. They make you a target. I used to run home from school because someone was always bullying me. Every day. The long way, the short way — didn't matter. Someone was waiting.

One day my father told me, "You're bigger than those kids. Stand up to them, or get a secondary beating at home." He wasn't teaching me courage. He was teaching me that pain was coming no matter what I did. I could take it from the bullies or I could take it from him. So I chose the bullies.

Sixth grade. A kid named Steve Hyser — little guy with a big mouth — used to make me run home from the bus stop. Until the day I didn't run. I stood there and forced him to act. When he swung, I grabbed him, threw him to the ground, and pounded him as hard as I could. I realized something in that moment: I would never be scared of another kid again. The bullies stopped. But something in me shifted that day too. I had learned that violence solved problems. That standing your ground meant putting someone else on the ground.

I was becoming the bad kid they all said I was.

My father, while he was laid up with his bad back, spent months dreaming. He created an elaborate restaurant concept based on Renaissance fairs. The servers would wear medieval costumes. A moat would run through the dining area. The menu would be themed, the atmosphere immersive. He lay on his back writing menus, creating budgets, drawing up business plans — all while his family opened dented cans for dinner. He called it Camelot.

It was a crazy dream. Except it wasn't. Against all odds, he found investors. They started buying restaurant equipment. Since the building was still under construction, they brought the equipment to our house. I'd come home from school to gourmet test recipes — five-layer sandwiches, chicken cordon bleu, steaks, elaborate desserts. For several months, we ate like kings. I thought my father had finally become the man he always wanted to be.

Once the restaurant opened, I would take a public bus forty-five minutes each way to go work there. I washed dishes. The rest of my family worked there too, so I always had a ride home. I didn't look at washing dishes as work, because for once I seemed to be making my father happy. I fit in. The employees loved me — or so I thought. Later in life I realized they never really liked me. I was the boss's bratty kid, and they tolerated me because they had to. But at the time, I felt like I belonged to something.

One day on the bus, a pack of Marlboro Lights with a lighter slid out from under my seat. I had always wanted to be cool. So I grabbed them, stuffed them in my bag, and went to work. The next morning, on the way to the school bus stop, I lit one up. I was so sure everyone would think I was cool.

They didn't. They told the bus driver. The bus driver told the school. The school called my father.

He had to leave work — sixteen-hour days trying to get a restaurant off the ground — to come pick me up and deal with his bad son yet again. How well do you think that went?

Then the dream died.

I never asked why my father stopped working at Camelot. I just came home one day and he wasn't going anymore. Later I found out the investors were laundering money. When my father discovered it, he walked away from his dream and left broke. I was crushed. No more good food. No more working alongside my dad. No more being part of something. I was mad at him for letting it fall apart.

A few months later, everyone involved was on the local news — arrested for money laundering and a laundry list of other charges. I remember feeling relief that my father wasn't one of them. But now we were back to being poor. And now I was poor and angry.

Kids who made fun of me got beat up. I was in the dean's office more than I was in class. The dean once told me, "I see you more than I see my own son." That year I set a record for the most referrals to the principal's office in school history. No one had ever been in trouble more than me.

Here's what no one knew: I was smart. Extremely smart. I would finish my work before everyone else in the class, and then I had nothing to do but sit there. A bored kid with a fast brain is a dangerous combination. I talked. I annoyed people. I made noises. I wasn't trying to be bad. I was trying to stay awake in a world that had no use for me beyond what I could finish in the first ten minutes of class.

Today they'd call it ADD. They'd give it a name and a treatment plan and an IEP. Back then, nobody had heard of it. There was no diagnosis. No help. No understanding. There was just a bad kid.

I spent a lot of time in in-school suspension. The school knew I wanted to be suspended — they knew I wanted the time off — so they kept me in the building instead. But they never asked why a smart kid kept getting in trouble. They just managed me.

I was mechanically inclined. I could look at an engine and understand how it worked. It was a gift I'd had since I was young — machines made sense to me in a way that people never did. While my father was still recovering from his back injury, he owned an MG Midget. When the transmission went out, he couldn't get under the car to do the work himself. But he knew I could.

He lay on the ground beside me and talked me through it. Step by step, he told me what to do — which bolts to turn, how to position my hands, where to apply pressure. I set that transmission on my chest and maneuvered it into place. No hydraulic jack. No shop full of tools. Just a father who knew what to do and a son who was built to do it.

It took about six hours. I was thirteen years old, big and strong for my age. When that transmission slid into place, I felt something rare between us. We had done something together. He couldn't do it without me. I couldn't do it without him. For a few hours in that driveway, I wasn't the bad kid. I was my father's son, and we were fixing a car.

Later, when my father was working so much at the restaurant, my friends and I would push that same MG Midget silently down the driveway and out of the neighborhood before starting the engine. We'd go joyriding all night. I was thirteen years old, stealing my father's car and staying out partying with my friends.

We were smart about it. We always pushed it in and out of the driveway so no one heard the engine. We always put gas in it so the tank never had less than when he parked it. He noticed his car had extra gas a couple of times — but who would add gas to a car? That didn't make sense to him. So he never put it together.

I was smart. I was crafty. I learned in those days how to read people. I learned quickly how to manipulate situations and blend into the scenery — a camouflage hunter, watching, seeking what I wanted while appearing to belong. That's how I survived.

And that's how I became good with women in the short term.

When I showed up to school covered in marks from my father's belt, nobody called child services. Nobody pulled me aside to ask if I was okay. I would walk up to the teacher and ask permission to stand instead of sit, because my back and legs were too bruised to press against a chair.

She looked at me — I can still see her face — and there was no shock. No concern. Just a flat expression that said, *Well, you're a bad kid. What do you expect?*

She gave me a lectern — a small, portable pulpit — and let me stand behind it for the day.

That was it. That was all the help I got.

My mother was devoted to God. Even when she wasn't going to church or talking about Him, you could see Jesus in her. She stood by my father in everything. If she disagreed with his discipline, we rarely knew about it. She was a godly woman doing her best in a hard situation, and she believed in a God who wouldn't let go of her son — even when that son was running as fast as he could in the other direction.

I was a difficult child. I don't say that to excuse what happened to me, but I won't pretend I was easy to raise. I was smart, bored, angry, and defiant. My father and I were caught in a cycle: he demanded respect I wouldn't give, and I wanted approval he didn't know how to offer. He called me bad. I lived up to the name.

I don't blame my father. He believed he was doing what was right. He believed discipline was love. He believed he was raising a boy who needed a firm hand, and he gave me the firmest hand he had. He's old now, his mind fading, and I've made peace with him. I love him. I've forgiven him. This book isn't about what he did wrong. It's about what God made right.

But the truth is, I grew up starving for someone to tell me I was good. And when you're starving, you'll eat whatever is put in front of you.

Chapter 2: The Hunger

I don't want to spend long here, because this part of the story isn't about assigning blame. It's about understanding where the hunger came from. Without the hunger, the rest of the story makes no sense.

I was a difficult child. I was smart, under-challenged, and desperate for approval. I got into trouble constantly — not because I was evil, but because I was bored and angry and had no

idea what to do with either feeling. My father believed in discipline, and he gave it generously. Backhands and belts were his language of correction. He believed with all his heart that he was doing what was right. He was raising a boy who needed a firm hand, and he gave me the firmest hand he had.

I don't remember every whipping. There were too many. What I remember is the feeling afterward — the marks on my skin, the ache when I moved, and underneath the physical pain, something quieter but more damaging: the sense that I deserved it. That I was bad. That this was simply what bad kids got.

At school, when I showed up too bruised to sit, a teacher gave me a lectern to stand behind and went on with her lesson. No questions. No intervention. Just a portable pulpit and the unspoken agreement that some children earn what they get.

I'm not telling you this to make you angry at my father, or at that teacher, or at the system. My father is an old man now. His mind is going. I've had conversations with him about the past, and he still says the same thing: "You were a bad kid." He believes it. He believes he did what was best for me. And I've chosen to forgive him — not because he asked, but because I couldn't carry the weight anymore. I love him. I won't lay the blame for my life at the feet of a dying man who thought he was doing right.

But here's what I need you to understand: I grew up hungry.

Hungry for someone to look at me and see something other than a problem. Hungry for a voice that said, "You are good. You matter. I'm proud of you." When you're that hungry, you don't check the expiration date on what you're fed. You just eat.

Someone offered me food.

He was a babysitter. I was in early elementary school — young enough that I still believed adults were safe.

I'm not going to give you the details of what happened. Those details belong to me, to the people I've trusted with them, and to God. What matters for this story is what that man gave me besides the abuse. He gave me words.

"You're such a good boy."
"I'm so proud of you."
"That felt good, didn't it? That means you're special."

I had never heard words like that before. Not from my father. Not from anyone. And here was an adult telling me I was good. Telling me he was proud. Telling me what we were doing was something special, something just between us.

The abuse felt good. Physically. I'm not going to pretend otherwise. That's part of what makes childhood sexual abuse so confusing and so destructive. The body responds. The heart responds. A little boy who has never been told he's good suddenly hears it in the context of something that should never happen to a child. The wires get crossed. Love and sex and approval get tangled into a knot that takes a lifetime to untie — if it ever gets untied at all.

I didn't untie it. I buried it. I buried it so deep I forgot it happened. But buried things don't die. They grow in the dark. They send up shoots that look like something else — an addiction, a compulsion, a hunger you can't name and can never satisfy.

I was fed poison dressed up as love. And I spent the next three decades wondering why I was so thirsty.

Gross things grow in the dark. When exposed to light, the gross things die away or can be cleaned. But I wouldn't learn that for a very long time.

Chapter 3: The Altar at Fourteen

The summer of 1983 in Cullman, Alabama, was the kind of hot that makes the air feel like a wet blanket. I was fourteen years old and already a professional at disappointing people.

My parents had sent me to live with my grandparents. The official reason was that I needed structure. The real reason was that my parents had run out of ways to control me, and my father had run out of patience. I was the kid teachers sighed about. The one other parents warned their children about. "That boy is bad news." I'd heard it so many times I'd stopped flinching.

My grandfather was a Baptist preacher. But he wasn't the quiet, stern kind some people picture when they think of old-time religion. In the pulpit, he was loud — a yeller when the Spirit moved. Outside of church, he was the life of the party, a man who filled a room with laughter and made everyone feel like they belonged. His name was Erwin Williams, but everyone just called him Preacher. To me, he was simply Grandpa.

And with me, he was patient. He had to be. I gave him plenty of reasons not to be, but he never gave up on me the way everyone else seemed to.

I don't remember the exact date of that revival service. A Sunday night, I think. The church was one of those white clapboard buildings that dot the Alabama countryside. Wooden pews worn smooth by decades of backsides. Handheld funeral-home fans with pictures of Jesus on them, because the air conditioning never worked right. The smell of stale coffee and old hymnals hanging in the air.

The visiting evangelist was a man named Buster Seaton. I don't know if he was famous or just passing through. What I remember is his voice. It started low, almost conversational, and built like a thunderstorm rolling across a field. He was preaching on the crucifixion, and he wasn't giving a theology lesson. He was telling a story.

He described the wood of the cross — rough, splintered, the kind that would dig into a man's back with every breath. He described the nails — not the sanitized versions we see in paintings, but thick iron spikes that tore through flesh and crushed bone. He described the thirst, the shame, the nakedness, the slow suffocation. He described the blood. He didn't rush past it or clean it up. He let it drip.

I had heard about Jesus all my life. My own grandfather had preached about Him from the same pulpit I was sitting in front of. But that night, I didn't just hear about Jesus. I saw Him. Hanging there. Bleeding there. Dying there. And for the first time in my fourteen years, I understood — not in my head, but somewhere deeper — that He was doing it for me.

Something inside me cracked open.

I didn't decide to move. My body just went. I stumbled out of that pew and down the aisle, and I hit the altar hard enough to bruise my knees. I wasn't thinking about who was watching. I wasn't thinking about what this would cost me. I wasn't thinking about the call to preach or the responsibility that comes with it. I was just a boy who had seen the cross for the first time, and all I could do was apologize.

"I'm sorry, Jesus."
"I'm sorry, Jesus."
"I'm sorry, Jesus."

Over and over. I don't know how long I stayed there. Long enough for the carpet pattern to imprint on my forehead. Long enough for my tears to make a dark spot on the worn fabric.

At some point, the crying stopped and the stillness came. And in that stillness, I knew. Not an audible voice. Not a vision. Just a knowing, as clear as my own name: God wanted me to preach. He wanted me to be an evangelist — someone who would travel and tell people about the cross the way Buster Seaton had just told me. Someone who would make the blood real.

I was fourteen. I had no idea what I was signing up for. And I was terrified.

Over the months that followed, I threw myself into the call. I studied under some amazing evangelists — men who took me under their wing and taught me the Word. I learned to open a Bible and find the thread of the gospel running from Genesis to Revelation. I learned to pray in a way that felt like a conversation instead of a wish list. I even preached a few times — nursing homes, small gatherings. Nothing glamorous. But it was real.

Grandpa was skeptical at first. He'd seen a lot of kids walk the aisle and lose the fire before the tears dried. But he was supportive. He didn't try to talk me out of it. He just watched, and waited, and reminded me that God wasn't going to let me go.

I felt the fire. I felt chosen. I felt like maybe, finally, I wasn't just the bad kid. I was God's kid.

Then I moved back in with my parents.

I wish I could tell you it was a gradual drift. It wasn't. It was a door slamming shut.

I walked back into a house where my father still looked at me like I was a problem to be managed, and something in me curdled. My mother loved God, but she stood by my father in everything. The fire I'd felt at that altar didn't vanish overnight. But I stopped feeding it. I stopped praying. I stopped opening the Bible. I stopped listening for the voice that had called me.

And I started looking for something else to fill the silence.

I found it in women. I found it in cars — fast ones, dangerous ones, the kind that made you feel powerful when everything inside you felt small. I found it in drugs. I started smoking at thirteen, drinking at fifteen, and by seventeen I was into harder things.

The boy who had wept at an altar and been called to preach became a teenager who chased every pleasure he could get his hands on. The call didn't go away. It went underground, buried under layers of numbness and noise.

But buried things have a way of rotting. And what rots eventually starts to stink.

I spent the next thirty-four years holding my nose and pretending I couldn't smell it.

Chapter 4: Nancy

I was twenty years old when I met her. She was eighteen — a bubbly, beautiful blonde who lit up a room just by walking into it. I was a training manager at Taco Bell. She was an employee.

We used to tease each other constantly. She was quick with insults — sharp, witty, never mean but always challenging. I liked that. I liked her. She was beautiful, and I was twenty, and beautiful was enough.

There was a party at my apartment one night. Nothing special — just people, music, whatever we could get our hands on. She came. At the end of the night, she called me. Her mother had thrown her out. Could she stay with me?

Of course she could. She was beautiful and I was young and I was into her. I had a two-bedroom apartment. She could have the spare room.

She never used it.

From the very first night, it was all sex. I need to be honest about that. Looking back, the entire relationship was built on sex. We called it love — and maybe we even believed it — but the foundation was physical. I didn't know how to build anything else. I had been taught, years earlier, that sex was the currency of approval. She made me feel wanted. She made me feel like a man. And I was hungry for that feeling.

She got pregnant. And just like that, I quit drugs.

Not gradually. Not with a program or a counselor or a twelve-step plan. I just stopped. Cold. I had been smoking pot since my teens, drinking heavily, experimenting with harder things. But when she told me she was pregnant, something clicked. I wasn't going to be that kind of father. I wasn't going to be the man my own father would have been if he'd had my vices. So I put the drugs down and didn't pick them back up.

What I didn't realize was that I hadn't quit addiction. I had just left an opening.

There is a God-shaped hole in every human being. The Bible says God set eternity in our hearts. We're built to be filled with something bigger than ourselves. When I quit drugs, the hole was still there. And nature abhors a vacuum. I needed something to fill it.

I reached for the thing that had always been closest to the surface. Sex. Approval. The feeling of being wanted. I started calling chat lines — this was before the internet was in every pocket — just voices on a phone, anonymous and available. It seemed harmless. It wasn't real, I told myself. It wasn't cheating. It was just talking.

But addiction is never just anything. It always wants more.

Our oldest daughter was born. She had PKU — a metabolic disorder that meant her body couldn't process certain proteins. It was manageable with a strict diet, but it was a blow. Our first child, and already something was wrong. We were young. We were stressed. I wasn't making much money. We started fighting.

The next year, our son was born. We didn't know it yet, but he had cystic fibrosis.

He was eight pounds, eight ounces at birth — healthy, we thought. But over the next nine months, he dropped to five pounds, four ounces. He ate constantly. He went through a pack of diapers in three days or less. And he kept losing weight. We didn't understand. We were feeding him everything we could, and he was starving in front of our eyes.

We went to emergency rooms. Doctors' offices. Clinics. Anywhere that would see us. Nobody could tell us what was wrong. We were young parents with a child who was fading, and no one had answers.

We ended up at a hospital in Kansas City. That's when Child Services stepped in. They removed our son from our custody. They had to — they had to prove we weren't the cause of his condition. We understood, but understanding didn't make it hurt less. We lived an hour away from the hospital. Now our baby was in that hospital, and we weren't allowed to see him.

The Ronald McDonald House wouldn't take us. We had lost custody, and their policies wouldn't allow it. So we slept in the car in the parking garage. Night after night, waiting for news, waiting for permission, waiting for someone to tell us what was wrong with our son.

They caught us eventually. We moved the car to a space across the street.

In those days, there were no cell phones. I had a beeper. The hospital was supposed to page me if they found anything. We waited several days — it felt like years. Our daughter was with family. We were alone in a car, two young parents with nothing to do but wait and pray and try not to fall apart.

The security guard came knocking on the window. We thought he was going to force us to leave. Instead, he told us we were needed in the hospital.

We got there and they sat us down. Our son was going to be okay. He had cystic fibrosis — something we'd never heard of before. It wasn't our fault. It was genetic. Something we'd both carried without knowing, and it had passed to him.

The Child Services worker apologized. She said she hadn't meant to cause us trouble, but she had to prove we weren't the cause of his deterioration. She had done her job. Now we could do ours.

They sent us home with a few printouts about cystic fibrosis and a sick baby. That was it. No manual. No support group. Just a stack of paper and a diagnosis that would define the rest of his life.

We moved to Atlanta. The hospital there was doing CF research. They had specialists who understood the disease in ways the doctors in Missouri hadn't. It was the right move for the children.

Then Nancy got pregnant again. Another son. He had CF too.

Now we had three children. All sick. All needing constant care. Doctors. Specialists. Medications. Bills. The pressure was unbearable.

Nancy snapped under the weight of it all. She started cheating on me. I can't blame her — not entirely. I wasn't a good person. I wasn't a good husband. The marriage had been built on sex from the beginning, and when the sex couldn't survive the stress of three sick children, there wasn't much foundation left to stand on.

We broke up. She moved her new boyfriend into my house. They played house while I lived in my car, working as a cab driver, trying to figure out what was left of my life.

That's when I met another girl. Someone kind. Someone stable. I moved in with her, and for a brief moment, things felt calm.

Then the phone rang. Nancy. Frantic. Her boyfriend had a gun. He was threatening the children. Could I come get them?

I went. Of course I went. Those were my kids.

The girl I was living with knew someone who could babysit. She called a friend — a young woman named Amy. Amy came over to help.

I didn't know it yet, but the woman who would spend the next twenty-two years of her life loving me had just walked through the door.

Chapter 5: Amy

She got in the car with her daughter in tow and started talking. And talking. And talking.

I don't remember what the story was about. Her grandmother, I think. Then her mother. Then her brothers. It went on for thirty minutes without a single break for air. I was exhausted just listening. So I said the first thing that came to mind.

"Do you ever shut up?"

She fired back something vulgar — I don't remember the exact words, but I remember the tone. Sharp. Quick. Unbothered. And then she kept talking. Didn't miss a beat. Didn't even pause for breath. Just swatted me away like a fly and kept going.

In that moment, something caught my attention. This motor-mouthed girl with the vulgar comeback and the absolute refusal to be intimidated — I wanted to know more about her.

Her name was Amy. She was eighteen years old. I was twenty-four.

She had come over to babysit during the crisis — Nancy's boyfriend with the gun, the frantic phone call, me scrambling to get my kids out of danger. The girl I was staying with knew Amy and called her to help. Amy walked in, took charge, and didn't stop talking the entire time.

That night, after the kids were settled, we stayed up late watching Beavis and Butt-Head. We made fun of each other. Teasing, insults, laughter — it was like sparring with someone who actually knew how to fight back. She was raw. Honest. Blunt. Vocal. Even obnoxious at times. And I loved it.

There's a theme in my life: I love a challenge. Nancy had been quick with insults. Amy was a whole different level — unfiltered, fearless, completely herself. She didn't perform. She didn't try to impress me. She just talked and laughed and said whatever came into her head. It was the most real thing I had ever encountered.

Within a few days, I was in love.

Nancy's crisis passed. She took the kids back. Amy went home.

Then Nancy called again. The boyfriend was back. The danger was back. Could I come get the kids?

I went. And Amy came back too.

This happened again. And again. Three times, Nancy's chaos pulled us together, and three times Amy showed up. By the third time, we weren't just two people thrown together by circumstance. We were a team.

We stayed at a hotel for a while after that third rescue. Just the two of us — and Rachael, Amy's daughter from a previous relationship. Rachael was not quite three years old. A tiny thing with big eyes and her mother's stubbornness. I met her just before her third birthday. From that day forward, I was her dad. Her biological father was never around. I was the one who showed up.

We didn't have a plan. We didn't have money. We just had each other, and for a little while, that felt like enough.

When Nancy came back to get the kids, we refused to give them back. They were in danger. We had seen it with our own eyes. So we kept them. We became a family overnight — me, Amy, Rachael, and my three sick children. Chaos and illness and poverty and love all thrown into a blender.

That's when the nightmare really began.

Nancy called the police. Often. She made up stories — told them I abused her. There was a restraining order against me for domestic violence that was built entirely on false accusations. She got the kids. Her boyfriend moved into my house. I paid their bills.

The boys received Social Security checks due to their medical conditions. Nancy stole them out of the mailbox while I was at work. I called the police. They began investigating.

But Nancy kept going to the judge. She kept showing him papers that said she had custody — except my papers from Social Services were newer. They showed I had legal custody. It didn't matter. The system was confused, and I was the one who paid for the confusion.

Six times I was arrested. Six times, police put handcuffs on me for abandoning children I had legal custody of. Six times I had to prove what the paperwork already showed — that those were my kids, that I was their legal guardian, that I hadn't abandoned anyone.

One day, the investigator who had been looking into Nancy's Social Security theft heard about the latest arrest. He took me to the District Attorney personally. He told the DA that if there was one more arrest warrant issued for me, he would rename the county. He was done watching the system get weaponized against a father who was trying to protect his children.

The DA listened. He looked at the evidence. And he told Nancy never to speak to me again. If she did, he would personally put her in prison.

Then she disappeared. For six years.

I couldn't get divorced. I couldn't marry Amy. I couldn't get legal closure on a marriage that had been dead for years. So we lived in limbo. Amy stayed.

Through all of this — the arrests, the false accusations, the restraining orders, the poverty, the sick children, the six-year disappearance, the legal chaos that never seemed to end — Amy stayed.

She truly, absolutely loved me. Unconditionally.

I didn't see it then. I couldn't. When we fought — and we fought often, two stubborn people with strong personalities and no money and too much stress — I would look for attention elsewhere. That was my pattern. That was my addiction. The wrong kind of sinner has a deep fear of rejection, and when I felt rejected, I reached for something to numb the pain.

The chat lines had started before Amy. They escalated after we got together. The internet was just beginning to explode into everyday life, and with it came access to things that had once been harder to find. Pornography. Chat rooms. Anonymous connections with strangers who didn't know I was a father, a partner, a man with responsibilities. In those spaces, I wasn't the bad kid. I wasn't the failure. I was wanted.

Amy caught me. Multiple times. Not on paper — I never used paper once I got a phone. It was undeleted voicemails I forgot to erase. Call logs I didn't clear. Browser histories I thought I'd hidden. She would find the evidence, and she would confront me, and I would apologize, and I would promise to stop.

I meant it every single time. That's the hell of addiction — you genuinely want to quit, and you genuinely can't. The dragon was bigger than my desire to stop. So I'd swear it was over, and I'd believe it was over, and then a few weeks or months later, she'd find something new.

And I'd ask her — I actually had the nerve to ask her — "Why do you keep hurting yourself?"

That's how my mind processed it. My secret life had nothing to do with her. She wasn't part of the fantasy. She wasn't in the chat rooms. She wasn't on the screen. That life was separate — a private escape that I had compartmentalized so thoroughly that I genuinely believed it didn't affect her. So when she went looking, when she dug through my phone or my computer, she was only hurting herself. That's what I told myself. That's what I told her. She should just stop looking. She should just trust me. She should just let me have this one thing that was mine, that had nothing to do with her, that didn't count.

I couldn't see that every image I looked at, every conversation I had, every boundary I crossed was a wound in her. I couldn't see that my "private escape" was draining the life out of our marriage. I couldn't see that she wasn't hurting herself — I was hurting her, and she was just finding the evidence.

The more I hurt her, the less she wanted to be intimate. The less intimate she was, the more I looked elsewhere. And the more I looked elsewhere, the more I hurt her. It was a cycle I couldn't stop, and she kept getting caught in the spokes.

After six years, I saw Nancy at a convenience store. She was working behind the counter. When she saw me, she literally ran away. She had been told what would happen if she ever contacted me again, and she wasn't about to test the DA's promise.

Amy and I got married right after that. After everything — the chaos, the waiting, the years of legal limbo — she finally became my wife.

We had twenty-two years together. Twenty-two years of her loving me unconditionally, and me taking that love for granted. Twenty-two years of her holding the family together while I chased whatever filled the hole in me that day.

In 2016, she caught me talking to a young girl. It was the last straw. We fought about it for days. Screaming matches. Tearful accusations. I had put her through so much already — the porn, the chat rooms, the emotional affairs — and now this. A girl young enough to be our daughter.

I told Amy to go visit our daughter and her husband. Just go. Take some time. Clear your head.

She went.

I never went back to get her.

I didn't realize what I had until I was locked in a cell with nothing but time and a Bible, and God showed me the wreckage. The real me. Not the me I thought I was — the fun guy, the hard worker, the man who just needed a little escape now and then. The real me. The man who had an amazing woman and systematically destroyed her trust. The man who had children watching and learning what love looked like from a father who couldn't keep his eyes or his hands or his heart where it belonged.

I had what I wanted. And I drove her away.

Chapter 6: The Search for More

By the time the internet became a fixture in everyday life, my addiction had a runway and a jet engine.

In the early days, it was just chat lines — voices on a phone, anonymous and fleeting. Then came dial-up. Chat rooms. Instant messages. The web was still in its infancy, but pornography was already its dominant industry. At one point, an estimated eighty percent of all internet content was pornographic. I didn't need eighty percent. I just needed enough to keep the numbness going.

The pattern was always the same. I would watch. I would get bored. I would search for something different. Something more. Something freaky. When that became normal, I would search for the next thing. And the next. And the next.

That's how sexual addiction works. It's not about pleasure — not really. It's about novelty. The brain craves the new, the forbidden, the next threshold. What shocked you yesterday is boring today. What thrilled you last week barely registers. You keep chasing the dragon, and the dragon keeps moving further away.

I didn't know I was an addict. I thought I just had a healthy love of all things sexual. That's what I told myself. That's the lie that kept the whole machine running.

Amy caught me so many times I lost count. Browser histories I forgot to delete. Undeleted voicemails. Call logs. Each time, she confronted me. Each time, I apologized. Each time, I meant it — in the moment.

But addiction doesn't care about your promises. It only cares about the next fix.

The more I hurt Amy, the less she wanted to be intimate with me. I couldn't blame her. Who wants to give themselves to a man who keeps giving pieces of himself to strangers on a screen? But I didn't see it that way at the time. I saw her withdrawal as rejection. And rejection was the thing I couldn't tolerate.

So I looked elsewhere. Which made her withdraw more. Which made me look elsewhere more. It was a death spiral, and we were both strapped into the cockpit.

I told myself it had nothing to do with her. My online life was separate — a private escape that didn't affect anyone else. I wasn't out in bars. I wasn't disappearing for days. I was just... looking. Talking. Exploring. It wasn't cheating. It was just words. Just images. Just a way to fill the silence.

But every image I looked at, every conversation I had, every boundary I crossed — it all took something from her. She bled in places I couldn't see. Or wouldn't see.

Here's something they don't tell you about porn: it makes you numb.

Not just to sex. To everything. You start needing more extreme content just to feel the same level of excitement. The thing that would have horrified you five years ago becomes Tuesday afternoon. Your conscience doesn't scream anymore. It yawns.

By the time I was in my late forties, I had crossed lines I never thought I would cross. I had seen things that, as a younger man, would have made me physically ill. Now they were just another tab. Another click. Another hit of nothing.

The numbness spread into the rest of my life. I stopped caring about consequences. I stopped caring about who I hurt. I stopped caring about the line between fantasy and reality, because the line had been erased so many times I couldn't find it anymore.

I was in a really dark place. And I had no idea how dark it had become until the lights came on.

In 2016, Amy caught me talking to a young girl.

She was eighteen. A hot redhead with an energy that made me feel young again. I told myself it was nothing. A fling. A fantasy. Just another escape from the pressure of real life. It was never supposed to be more than that.

But when Amy left to visit our daughter, I didn't wait. I didn't mourn. I didn't reflect. I moved the girl into our home within days. And we went deep. Fast.

We were blissful — or what addicts call bliss. Partying all the time. Drinking heavily. Having sex constantly. The kind of sex that pushed boundaries, that blurred lines, that required the next threshold to feel the same thrill. We did things on camera that pushed the border of legal. The fantasy life I had cultivated in secret for decades was now my actual life. I had brought the darkness out of the screen and into my home. And I loved it.

I told myself I had finally found what I was looking for. Acceptance. Adventure. A woman who didn't judge me, who joined me in the perversion instead of confronting it. She wasn't a victim — she was a participant. We fed each other's worst impulses and called it love. We were on a runaway train, and we were cheering as it picked up speed.

Then she got pregnant.

The pregnancy made it serious — or what I thought was serious at the time. I was forty-eight years old. She was eighteen. I had left my wife of twenty-two years. I had moved a teenager into my home. I had built a life on a foundation of fantasy and filth. And now a child was coming. A real child. Innocent. Helpless. About to be born into the wreckage I had created.

We were six months along, lying in bed on a night like any other, when the door came in.

Part Two: The Fall

2016–2017

Chapter 7: The Box

I was asleep.

Not resting. Not peaceful. The sleep of a man who has numbed himself so thoroughly that unconsciousness is the only relief. Beside me, six months pregnant, lay the girl I had left my wife for. The hot redhead. The one I told myself was just a fling. The one who was now carrying my child. I was forty-eight years old, and I had burned my entire life to the ground to get here. And I was still numb enough to think I'd gotten away with it.

Then the world exploded.

The door didn't open. It gave way. The sound of it — wood splintering, hinges tearing, boots on the floor — is something you don't forget. Lights in my face. Shouting. My name being yelled from multiple directions at once. I couldn't process what was happening. I was barely conscious, face-down on the mattress I'd been sleeping on seconds before, hands being wrenched behind my back.

"GBI! Don't move!"

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Local police. A raid team. All of them in my bedroom, surrounding the bed where I lay next to a pregnant teenager.

They had found child pornography on my computer.

I want to pause here, because this is the part of the story where it would be easy to deflect. To minimize. To say it wasn't mine, or I didn't know it was there, or it was someone else's fault. I'm not going to do that. I knew it was there. I'm not saying I sought it out. I'm not saying it belonged to me in the way that something you deliberately collect belongs to you. But I knew it was on my computer, and I didn't delete it. I didn't report it. I didn't turn away from it.

That's what numbness does. The thing that would have horrified you five years ago becomes Tuesday afternoon. The line you swore you'd never cross becomes a distant memory in the rearview mirror. Your conscience doesn't scream anymore. It yawns.

I was charged with exploitation of a minor. A felony charge. The kind of charge that ends lives. The kind of charge that makes you a monster in the eyes of the world long before you ever see a courtroom. The kind of charge that, even if you never go to trial, follows you forever.

They put me in handcuffs. They walked me out of that house. I don't remember what I said to the girl. I don't remember if I said anything at all. I just remember the cold air hitting my face as they pushed me into the back of a squad car, and the thought that kept looping in my head: *This is it. This is where it ends.*

Jail is loud and quiet at the same time.

Loud in the ways that grate on you constantly — metal doors slamming, guards shouting, other inmates yelling across the block, the perpetual hum of fluorescent lights that never turn off. Quiet in the ways that matter. No one visits. No one calls. The world outside keeps moving while you sit in a concrete box and rot.

I sat in that box for sixty-four days.

Let me tell you what sixty-four days feels like. The first week, you're in shock. You can't believe you're there. You keep thinking someone will realize it's a mistake, that the door will

open and they'll let you go. The second week, the shock wears off and the reality sets in. This is your life now. A bunk with a thin mattress. A toilet with no privacy. Meals on a tray slid through a slot. The third week, you start to forget what the outside feels like. The fourth week, you start to forget who you were before you got here.

By the eighth week, you've stopped counting.

I had estranged myself from everyone. My sexual addiction had driven me to isolate from friends and family. I hadn't spoken to my mother in over a year. I had abandoned my wife. I had surrounded myself with people who enabled my behavior and called it love. Now, in jail, there was no one. The silence was deafening.

Except my mother heard I was in jail. And she reached out.

My mother was devoted to God in a way that I had spent my whole life running from. Even when she wasn't going to church, you could see Jesus in her. The way she loved people. The way she refused to give up on me. The way she kept praying long after everyone else had written me off as a lost cause.

She got word to me through the jail. Told me to call her. So I did.

We needed $26{,}000 for bond. Even with a bondsman, it was 3{,}500$. I might as well have asked for a million. No one in my life had that kind of money. No one was going to put up that kind of cash for a man arrested on my charges.

"God is trying to get ahold of you," my mother said.

There it was. The God talk. It was always the God talk with her. I was sitting in a jail cell, facing the possibility of decades in prison, my life in ruins, and she wanted to talk about God.

I was angry. I was bitter. I was so deep in my sin that I couldn't see past it. So I threw her faith back in her face.

"I'm in jail," I said. "He can't call me. If you don't have His number, He can't contact me."

The words came out cold. Mocking. I wanted to hurt her. I wanted to hurt anyone who still believed in a God who had let my life turn into this.

"Don't mock God," she said. Her voice didn't waver. She wasn't angry. She was firm, like a mother correcting a child who should know better.

I was in such a bind. I had no money. No options. No hope. So I said the words that would change everything — even though I didn't mean a single one of them.

"If He gets me out, I'll go to church."

She didn't celebrate. She knew me too well.

"Don't tempt Him."

That made me angrier. She was supposed to be happy. She was supposed to take the win. Instead, she was warning me like I was playing with fire. So I doubled down. I said the most ridiculous thing I could think of, something that would prove how little I believed.

"I'm so sure He can't get me out. I'll go to Bible college if He gets me out."

Silence on the line.

"Call me in a week," she said.

A week in jail is an eternity. Every day is the same. The same walls. The same food. The same noise. The same nothing. You sleep because there's nothing else to do. You wake up because you can't sleep forever. The hours stretch out like a rubber band that never snaps.

I called her back exactly one week later.

Her voice was different this time. There was something in it I couldn't identify. Awe, maybe. Or the kind of holy fear that comes from watching God do exactly what He said He would do.

"I wish you had called the next day," she said.

"Why?"

"Your dad went out to the mailbox. There was a credit card. Activated and usable. For $3,500."

I stopped breathing.

Not $3{,}000. Not 5{,}000$. $3,500. Exactly the amount we needed for the bondsman. Exactly the number I had thrown at God like a dare. Exactly the price of my freedom.

I had mocked Him. I had dared Him to prove He was real. I had made promises I had no intention of keeping — go to church, go to Bible college — and God had answered anyway. Not because I was sincere. Not because I deserved it. Because He was trying to get ahold of me. And He was willing to use a credit card in the mail, activated and usable, with the exact dollar amount required to spring me from a jail cell.

Something shifted in me when I heard those words. I can't explain it fully. It wasn't a lightning bolt. It wasn't an angelic choir. It was more like a mirror being held up to my face for the first time in years, and I saw what I had become.

I had become a horrible person.

I had destroyed my marriage. I had abandoned my children. I had moved a teenager into my home and gotten her pregnant. I had filled my computer with images no human being should possess. I had cut off everyone who loved me. I had mocked the God who made me.

And despite all of that, He had just reached down into my filth and pulled me out.

I didn't deserve it. I knew I didn't deserve it. And for the first time in my life, that wasn't an excuse to keep running. It was a reason to stop.

When I walked out of that jail, I was changed. Not completely. Not fully. I gave God most of me — but I held back the part I thought I could still control. That hidden corner where the sexual addiction lived. I didn't know it yet, but you can't give God most of yourself and expect the rest to heal on its own. He wants all of you. The hidden part too.

But I wasn't there yet. I was just a man who had been given a second chance, walking out of a jail cell into a world that had moved on without him.

Two weeks later, my daughter was born.

I was there for the birth. I held her in my arms — this tiny, fragile thing, wrapped in a hospital blanket, eyes barely open. She was perfect. She was innocent. She had no idea who her father was or what he had done. She just knew warmth and heartbeat and the sound of a voice that hadn't earned the right to speak to her.

I looked at her and felt something I hadn't felt in years. Hope. Real hope. Not the counterfeit hope of the next conquest or the next high or the next escape. The kind of hope that makes you want to be better.

But hope doesn't pay rent.

My bills hadn't been paid in two months. My rent was already late before the arrest, and sixty-four days in jail had buried me. The landlord didn't care about my newborn daughter or my jailhouse conversion. He cared about the money I owed him. And I didn't have it.

He put everything I owned on the street.

Everything. Furniture. Clothes. Dishes. Books. The few keepsakes I had accumulated over forty-eight years of life. All of it, piled on the curb like garbage. Which, I suppose, is exactly what it was.

Then my girlfriend's grandmother threw her out.

Not because of money. Not because of the arrest itself. Because I had been there for the birth of my own daughter.

I had gone to the hospital. I had held my child. I had been present for the first breaths of a life I helped create. And for that, my girlfriend's grandmother decided she was done. She threw her own granddaughter out of the house. She refused to see the newborn — refused to even lay eyes on her — because I had been at the hospital.

I wasn't convicted yet. I hadn't been to trial. I was just accused. But accusation was enough. The accusation alone made me a monster in people's eyes. And anyone associated with me was guilty by proximity. Even an innocent baby, hours old, wasn't exempt from the stain of who I was accused of being.

We had a newborn. We had nothing. We were homeless.

I called my mother.

The woman I had ignored for over a year. The woman whose God I had mocked from a jail cell. The woman who had prayed for me when I was running as fast as I could in the other direction.

"Congratulations," I said. "You're a grandma again. And we're homeless."

She didn't sigh. She didn't lecture. She didn't say "I told you so" or "this is what happens when you turn your back on God."

She said two words.

"Come on."

We drove from Pensacola, Florida, to North Augusta, South Carolina. Hours on the interstate, a newborn in the back seat, a girlfriend who had lost everything, and me — a man with no money, no home, and no plan, carrying the weight of an accusation that hadn't even gone to trial yet.

My mother and father rented a travel trailer for us to stay in. It was small — a metal box with a bed, a kitchenette, and a roof that didn't leak. It wasn't much. It was more than we deserved.

We lived in that trailer for six months.

Something happened during those months that I can't fully explain. Both of us — me and the girl — stopped the sexual deviation. No more freaky stuff. No more chasing the next thing. No more feeding the addiction. We developed a normal, healthy relationship. It was the first time in decades that sex wasn't the center of my life.

We started going to church. My mother's church. The one she had probably been praying I'd walk into for thirty-four years. I sat in the pew and listened. I didn't raise my hands. I didn't run to the altar. I just sat there, week after week, letting the words wash over me. Letting God do what He does.

Then we moved to Thomaston, Georgia, where my son lived. And everything seemed like it was finally turning around.

Chapter 8: The False Spring

Thomaston, Georgia. A small town where everybody knows everybody, and everybody knows everybody's business. We moved there to be closer to my son. We found a church — the kind of church that has a coffee shop in the lobby and a name that sounds more like a corporate brand than a body of believers. But this church was different. It wasn't stagnant. It wasn't a Sunday-morning bore. It was on fire. Reaching people. Running programs for addiction. Life groups forming everywhere. It was amazing to be involved with something that powerful. I threw myself into it.

From the outside, I was a man on the rise. I showed up early. I stayed late. I volunteered for everything no one else wanted to do. I mowed grass — at least once a week, riding a mower across fields that seemed to stretch forever. In the Georgia heat, with the sun beating down and the smell of cut grass filling my lungs, I felt something I hadn't felt since I was fourteen years old. Peace. Not the counterfeit peace of a screen or a chat room. Real peace. The kind that comes from serving something bigger than yourself.

The church put on big gospel concerts. We're talking professional-grade productions — sound systems, lighting rigs, artists people had actually heard of. I worked behind the scenes. Setting up chairs. Running cables. Whatever they needed. I wasn't preaching. I wasn't leading. I was just a pair of hands, and that was enough. No one knew my past. No one asked. I was just the guy who showed up and worked hard.

I enrolled in Bible college.

Let me say that again. I enrolled in Bible college. The call I had received at fourteen — the call I had buried under thirty-four years of drugs and sex and running — I was finally answering it. I was going to be an evangelist. I was going to preach. I was going to stand up in front of people and tell them about the cross the way Buster Seaton had told me when I was a boy.

Then my landlord called.

I was behind on rent. Nothing new — money was always tight. He pulled into my driveway and told me to get in his car. He used his vehicle as an office, so I figured I knew what was coming. An eviction notice. A deadline. A polite but firm request to find somewhere else to live.

Instead, he just drove.

We went around to the rough section of town. The kind of neighborhood where the cops come in pairs and the corner store has bars on the windows. He pulled up to an empty house that was being remodeled. Then he started talking.

He had heard about my dedication to the church. He had been looking for someone to help run his ministry — a ministry that operated in this very neighborhood. Every week, they'd set up grills and cook burgers and hot dogs. They'd play praise music — not the polished stuff from the main stage, just a guitar and some voices. They'd hold church right there on the lawn. People from the neighborhood would wander over. People who would never step foot in a sanctuary. People who smelled like alcohol and looked like they hadn't slept. People like me.

He wanted to remodel a house specifically for us — me and my girlfriend and our baby. In that neighborhood. So I could be a local missionary. Not in Africa. Not in some distant country. Right there, on those streets, among those people.

The rent would be cheaper than what I was paying now. And he'd let me work it off — painting houses at a generous hourly rate. I wouldn't just have a place to live. I'd have a purpose. A calling. A way to serve.

The church got involved. They donated furniture. A crib for the baby. Volunteers showed up with hammers and paintbrushes. It felt like the entire body of Christ had wrapped its arms around us. For the first time in my life, I felt accepted. Wanted. Part of something bigger than myself.

The landlord — the man who had started this whole thing — went to a different church before all this. But he saw the fire in our church. The passion. The programs for addiction. The life groups. He saw something real, and he switched churches because of it. Because of what God was doing.

It felt like redemption. It felt like the story was finally turning around.

Then they found out about my arrest.

It had been three years since the raid. Three years since the jail cell. Three years since I had walked out of that concrete box and tried to become a different person. In all that time, I hadn't been indicted. There was no trial date. No conviction. Just an arrest. Just an accusation. I had started to believe that maybe, just maybe, the past would stay in the past.

But the past doesn't stay anywhere. It follows you. It waits. And when you least expect it, it taps you on the shoulder and asks to have a word.

The pastor called me one afternoon. I was at work. His voice on the phone was different than usual. There was something tight in it. Something formal.

"Can you come to the office?"

I packed up and drove over. When I walked in, it wasn't just him. The assistant pastor was there. The church secretary was there. Three people, arranged behind a desk like a tribunal. I sat down across from them. My heart was pounding, but I didn't know why yet.

"We heard about your arrest," the pastor said.

The air left the room.

"It's disturbing," he said.

I didn't deny it. I didn't deflect. I told them the truth — the whole truth. About the addiction. About the darkness. About the arrest. And then I told them what God had done. How He had pulled me out of that jail cell. How He had changed me. How I wasn't the same man I had been three years ago.

The pastor listened. Then he spoke words that I will never forget.

"We can't take a chance."

I sat there, waiting for him to say more. Maybe some words of grace. Maybe an acknowledgment that God could change even someone like me. Maybe a plan for how we could move forward together, carefully, with accountability and boundaries and wisdom.

None of that came.

"I can't tell you not to attend services," he said. "But don't come early. And leave during the altar call."

Don't come early. Leave during the altar call. Don't let people see you. Don't let anyone know you're here. Don't be a part of the body — be a ghost in the back row, slipping in after the music starts and disappearing before the final prayer.

The same day, the landlord called me. The pastor had called him first.

The house they were remodeling for us? We couldn't move into it. My rent went back up. I was no longer able to work for him. The ministry in the bad section of town — the grills, the music, the church on the lawn — I was no longer welcome there either.

Think about that. I wasn't fit to minister to drug addicts. To prostitutes. To the lowest of the low. I was unwanted by the unwanted. I was lower than the worst of the worst. A serial killer would have been more welcomed than me.

Surely a man with a bad past can still minister in the slums? I mean, I was one of them. I wasn't some goody-two-shoes who wanted to feel better about himself by helping the less fortunate. I wasn't a suburban volunteer looking for a weekend service project to assuage middle-class guilt. I was them. I had been them. I had lived in the darkness, breathed the darkness, become the darkness. And now, when I tried to bring light back into that same darkness, the door was slammed in my face.

Not by the addicts. Not by the prostitutes. By the church. By the landlord. By the people who held the keys.

If I couldn't minister to the worst of the worst, who could I minister to? If the slums weren't low enough for me, where was I supposed to go?

There was nowhere. I was beneath the bottom. The wrong kind of sinner.

That's when I discovered I was the wrong kind of sinner.

The church welcomed addicts. I had seen it with my own eyes. Alcoholics. Drug addicts. Gambling addicts. They came through those doors and were met with open arms. Testimonies were celebrated. Recovery was cheered. "Come as you are" was printed on the banners and projected on the screens.

But sexual sin was different. That was the one thing you couldn't come back from. That was the stain that didn't wash out. That was the sin that made you too dangerous for grace.

I walked out of that pastor's office and felt something I hadn't felt in years. Rejection. The same rejection I had felt as a boy, standing behind a lectern because I was too bruised to sit.

The same rejection I had felt when the teacher looked at me with flat eyes and said, *You're a bad kid.* The same rejection I had felt when my father backhanded me and called it discipline.

Only this time, it was wearing a pastor's smile and speaking in a calm, measured voice about "taking chances."

And this time, the landlord — the one who had believed in me, who had given me a vision and a purpose and a way to serve — followed right behind.

I got mad at God.

How could He do this? I was working for Him! I was mowing His grass and grilling His burgers and singing His songs in a bad neighborhood where nobody else wanted to go. I was enrolled in Bible college. I was finally doing what He had called me to do when I was fourteen years old. And now He was letting them throw me out? Not just the pastor, but the landlord too?

My relationship with my girlfriend crumbled. The stress. The shame. The feeling of being unwanted by the very people who were supposed to be my family. She left me and went back to her grandmother. I was alone again.

I forgot about God. I forgot about Bible college. I forgot about the call. I got my CDL and learned to drive trucks. Long hauls. Open road. Nothing but miles and silence and the occasional crackle of the CB radio. It was a way to disappear without actually dying.

Eventually, my girlfriend and I got back together. We got married. I tried to rebuild something that looked like a normal life. The accusation still hung over me — no indictment, no trial, just the waiting. But I had learned to live with it. I had learned to pretend.

Then I got a text.

"Your court date is October 13, 2021."

Four years after the arrest. Four years of trying to outrun what was coming. The past had finally caught up, and it wasn't tapping me on the shoulder anymore. It was kicking down the door.

Part Three: The Monastery

2021–Present

Chapter 9: October 13, 2021

Four years.

That's how long I waited between the raid and the indictment. Four years of trying to rebuild. Four years of almost making it. Four years of believing maybe, just maybe, the past would stay buried.

It didn't.

The text came out of nowhere. A number I didn't recognize. Words that stopped my heart.

"Your court date is October 13, 2021."

Four years of waiting, and now I had a date with a judge. We hired an attorney. He swore it was an easy case. Don't worry, he said. We'll walk in, we'll handle it, you'll walk out. I believed him. I wanted to believe him.

The morning of October 13, I put on the best clothes I had. My wife was with me. My attorney was confident. We walked into that courtroom like we were walking into a formality.

The judge didn't do what we hoped. He didn't do what we expected.

He tripled my bond.

Just like that, I was in handcuffs again. The bailiff led me out of the courtroom. I looked back at my wife. Her face was pale. She was watching me disappear again. All the progress. All the rebuilding. All the hope. Gone in the span of a single ruling.

They took me back to jail.

This time was different than 2017. In 2017, I was still numb. Still arrogant. Still mocking God from a concrete box. This time, I was scared. This time, I had tasted redemption and watched it get ripped away. This time, I knew exactly what I was losing.

I was in jail for two weeks.

Two weeks of waiting. Two weeks of not knowing what was going to happen next. Two weeks of wondering if this was the time the door wouldn't open.

Then it got worse.

They mugged me. Inside the jail. For my commissary — my "zoom zooms and wham whams," the junk food and snacks that pass for currency on the inside. It wasn't an elaborate heist. Just the strong taking from the weak. The kind of thing that happens every day in places like this. But it was enough. Enough for them to determine I wasn't safe in general population.

They moved me to protective custody.

Protective custody sounds like a privilege. It's not.

It's a cell. A single cell. Twenty-three hours a day locked inside. One hour out — to shower, make a call, decompress. That's it. Twenty-three hours alone with nothing but four walls and a steel door and your own thoughts.

The only book allowed was a Bible.

I had nothing else. No television. No radio. No tablet. No phone. No visitors during those twenty-three hours. No conversation. No distraction. Just silence. Just me. Just God.

I didn't know it yet, but I had just entered the monastery.

That cell became my wilderness. Not a place of punishment — though it felt like one at first. A place of separation. A place where all the noise got stripped away and there was nothing left to hide behind.

I spent over a year in that county jail, waiting for trial. A year. Not weeks. Not months. A full year of twenty-three-hour days in a concrete box with one book.

I started reading the Bible because I had nothing else to do. Let me be honest about that. I didn't start reading because I was holy. I started reading because I was bored. Because the alternative was staring at a wall for twenty-three hours. Because the silence was so loud I thought it might crush me.

I read the entire Bible seven times in that county jail. By the time I was transferred to prison, I had lost count of how many times I'd read it. Genesis to Revelation. The stories I had heard in Sunday school as a kid. The laws. The prophets. The Gospels. The letters. The apocalypse. Over and over. The words started to sink into me in a way they never had before. Not as information. Not as doctrine. As life.

And as I read, God started to deal with me.

He didn't start with my sins. He started with my identity.

For decades, I had believed a lie about myself. I thought I was a man with a healthy appetite for all things sexual. That's what I told myself. That's what I told anyone who confronted me. I wasn't an addict — I just enjoyed sex more than most people. I wasn't compulsive — I was adventurous. I wasn't broken — I was liberated. The pornography, the chat rooms, the affairs, the young girl, the filming — all of it was just the natural expression of a man who loved sex. That was the story I had written for myself, and I had read it so many times I believed it was true.

God showed me the man I thought I was. Confident. In control. Healthy. Normal. A guy with a strong sex drive and the freedom to explore it. That was the image I projected. That was the mask I wore.

Then He took the mask off.

He showed me who I really was. Not the cleaned-up church volunteer who mowed grass and worked behind the scenes. The real me. The pile of worthlessness I had created of myself. The addict. The manipulator. The man who had destroyed his marriage, abandoned his children, and landed in prison with a felony charge and a lifetime registry waiting for him on the other side.

The man I thought I was didn't exist. He never had. He was a fiction I had constructed to hide from the truth. And the truth was ugly. My sexual addiction was real. It was a problem. It had driven every destructive decision I had made for thirty-four years. I wasn't a man with a healthy love of sex. I was a man in chains, and I had decorated the chains and called them jewelry.

It was brutal. It was necessary.

I remembered how I used to pray — asking God for things, making deals, trying to get Him to do what I wanted. And then I'd get up and leave. Never wait for an answer. Never sit still long enough to hear His voice. We pray, get up, and walk away, never giving Him a chance to respond.

Not this time. This time I couldn't walk away. This time I was locked in a box with nowhere to run. This time, when I prayed, I had to sit there. I had to listen. I had to let Him answer.

And He did.

He said, "I've got you where I can deal with you now. You can't run."

I started seeing His grace everywhere in Scripture. Joseph — a prisoner who became a prince. Moses — a murderer who became a deliverer. Samson — a womanizer who still showed up in the hall of faith. David — an adulterer and a murderer who was called a man after God's own heart. Peter — a denier who became the rock of the church. Paul — a persecutor who became an apostle.

Everyone in the Bible was unqualified. Everyone tried to run. Everyone had a past.

I wasn't the exception. I was the rule.

God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called. The only person He ever chose because he had the qualities of a king was Saul — and Saul was useless. Tall, handsome, kingly, and completely worthless. Then God picked David — the overlooked shepherd boy with a heart that chased after God and a life full of moral failure. And He called David a man after His own heart.

That truth started to work its way into the cracks of my soul.

But God wasn't done with the excavation. He had shown me who I was. Next, He was going to show me why.

The repressed memories started surfacing. The babysitter. The words I had never heard from my father, suddenly spoken by a predator. "You're such a good boy. I'm so proud of you." The wires that got crossed — love and sex and approval tangled into a knot I had never untied.

For the first time in my life, I faced it. Not buried. Not numbed. Not medicated. Faced.

And I realized something that changed everything: I wasn't at fault for being abused. I was a child. I didn't ask for it. I didn't deserve it. The man who did those things was responsible for his actions. Not me.

But I had tortured myself for decades. I had accepted the blame. I had forced the blame on myself for something that was never my fault. And that false blame had driven me into a lifetime of running.

In that cell, I forgave him. I forgave my father for the beatings. I forgave the babysitter for the abuse. And I forgave myself — for believing the lie that I was bad, that I deserved it, that I was beyond saving.

Gross things grow in the dark. When exposed to light, the gross things die away or can be cleaned.

I was finally letting the light in.

I also had to face what my addiction really was.

Sex wasn't a recreation. It wasn't a conquest. It wasn't a drug to numb the pain. It was a gift — a bond between a man and his wife, designed by God, and perverted by the devil like everything else God created. I had taken something holy and turned it into something profane. And I had the wreckage of three marriages to prove it.

For the first time, I understood: my relationships with my spouses weren't the problem. The addiction was. The need for more — which, by the grace of God, had left me after that first jail stay — had been the engine driving my entire life. And now I was looking at it in the light.

It was ugly. It was humiliating. It was freedom.

Men will always fail you. I learned that in prison. Not just the ones who mugged me for commissary. Not just the system that tripled my bond. The pastors. The landlords. The people

who said they believed in redemption but only for certain kinds of sinners. They will fail you. Intentionally or unintentionally, they will.

God won't.

I learned who He is in that cell. Not the angry judge I had been running from my whole life. A loving Father. And as all loving fathers do, He has to chasten His children. Sometimes a spiritual time-out is needed. That's where I was. That's what the monastery was.

I had been called to preach at fourteen. I had run for thirty-four years. I had been arrested, rejected, imprisoned, and stripped of everything. And in a cell with one book and twenty-three hours of silence, I finally stopped running.

The call was still there. It had never gone anywhere. I had just been too loud to hear it.

Chapter 10: Ministry Behind the Wire

Prison is not a place anyone would choose to build a ministry. But then again, God has a habit of building things in places no one would choose.

I came into the system on October 13, 2021. I am currently parole eligible, but I have nowhere to go — so I am here until I find housing or until 2035, when I max out. That's the legal reality. The spiritual reality is something else entirely.

Somewhere in the middle of that year in county jail, between the seventh reading of the Bible and the excavation of my past, I stopped playing God's game to get out and started listening for His voice. I stopped treating prayer like a wish list and started treating it like a conversation. And in the silence of that cell, God began to give me assignments.

The first assignment was music.

I had always been musical. My man cave, back in the life before all this, was full of instruments and sound systems and kegerators. Music was a hobby then — something I did for myself. In prison, it became something else. It became a lifeline.

I use an AI generator to create the music now. I write the lyrics. I shape the sound. The technology lets me do from inside what I could never do with instruments alone. Is it the same as a studio full of musicians? No. But God doesn't need a studio. He just needs a willing vessel.

My music is all over the place stylistically, but the message is consistent: God is real, God is good, and God saves sinners. The songs are uplifting. Encouraging. Some are testimonies set to melody. Some are praise. Some are calls to wake up and stop running.

One song in particular carries the weight of everything I've lived. It's called "Wrong Kind of Sinner." It's my testimony in song form — the rejection, the shame, the accusation that sexual sin is somehow beyond the reach of the cross. The chorus asks a question I've been asking since that day in the pastor's office:

Why am I the wrong kind of sinner?
The one they can't fully embrace?
If Jesus cast demons and raised up the dead,
Can't He cure sexual sin and remove every trace?

The song doesn't pull punches. It calls out the church for welcoming the addict and cheering for the drunk while shoving the sexual sinner out the back door. It declares that the blood of Jesus is stronger than any chain — including the ones you can't see.

I write songs because I can't preach from a prison cell. Not yet. But music travels through walls.

You can hear the music at **www.wrongkindofsinner.com**.

The second assignment was recovery.

I started looking at my own story not just as a testimony but as a blueprint. God had taken me through a process — a brutal, thorough, transformative process. He hadn't just forgiven my

sins. He had dug down to the roots. He had exposed the childhood wounds. He had redefined sex itself. He had taken me from "healthy appetite" to "addict" to "redeemed."

Could that process be put into a framework? Could what God did for me become something that could help other men?

I started sketching out a recovery program. Not a twelve-step knockoff. Not a behavior-modification plan. Something different. Something that starts where addiction actually starts: with a wound.

Most recovery programs focus on behavior. Stop doing this. Stop looking at that. Install accountability software. Join a group. Call your sponsor. And those things have value. But they're treating the symptom, not the cause. Nobody becomes a sexual addict because they saw a picture they shouldn't have seen. They become a sexual addict because something in them is broken. Some trauma. Some rejection. Some lie they believed about themselves when they were too young to know it was a lie.

My program — and I'm still building it, still refining it — starts with the cause. Some form of emotional trauma. The wound that created the hunger. Then it addresses the five different sources of addiction: mental, emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual. They're all intertwined. You can't pull one thread without moving the others. Most programs I've seen address one or two. None address all five. I want to build something that treats the whole web.

The process goes something like this: Face the pain. Accept that the trauma happened — and that it wasn't your fault. That's the hardest step for most men. We tend to accept blame or force blame on ourselves for other people's actions. We carry guilt that doesn't belong to us. Once you've faced it and accepted that you weren't to blame, it can no longer hurt you. Then you can forgive the person who hurt you. Then — and this is the one nobody talks about — you can forgive yourself.

After the trauma work comes the identity work. Who do you think you are? Who do you want to be? And then the hardest question: Who does God say you are? The real you. Not the mask. Not the addiction. The man God created before the wound, before the sin, before the chains.

Then the spiritual work. Because the God-shaped hole that drove me from drugs to sex to destruction is still there. And it can only be filled by Him. Not by sobriety. Not by accountability. Not by white-knuckle behavior management. By Jesus.

I'm still figuring out the steps. I understand the web, but explaining it — putting it into language other men can follow — is harder than living it. The full recovery program will be available at **www.wrongkindofsinner.com** when it's ready.

The third assignment is just presence.

I'm not actively ministering to anyone in a formal way right now. I'm willing. They aren't always ready. So I sit. I talk. I let men know that I understand what they're going through and I'm willing to help when they're ready.

There are two men I sit with regularly. They've decided to quit using. That's a big deal — the decision itself is a miracle. But they're not ready for the steps yet. They're not ready to dig into the wound. They just know they want to stop.

Most of the men I talk to are drug addicts. In prison, you don't talk about sexual addiction. That can literally get you killed. So I talk to the drug addicts about drugs. I tell them I was on crack thirty-five years ago. Hooked. Homeless. Alone. I tell them I've been there. I've seen the darkness. I loved the feeling of numbness — but it came with a price. It took me away from myself and everything I loved.

I don't preach at them. I don't push the steps. I just let them know that someone in here understands. Someone in here has walked through what they're walking through and came out the other side still breathing, still believing, still building.

That's ministry too. Maybe it's the most important kind. Presence. Availability. The willingness to sit with someone in their mess without demanding they clean it up on your timeline.

Everyone in here knows my story. My charges. My past. I speak openly about it, because God has my six. Some cheer me on publicly. Some would stab me in the back if they had the chance. But I'm not here to win a popularity contest. I'm here to tell the truth. And the truth is that Jesus Christ pulled me out of a pit I dug with my own two hands, and He can do the same for anyone in here. Anyone out there. Anyone.

I'm also writing this book. The one you're holding right now. That's an assignment too. I didn't know where to start. A friend interviewed me — asked me questions, drew the story out, helped me see the arc of my own life. What started as a scattered testimony became an autobiography. What started as a pamphlet became a book.

And now I'm sending it out into the world from inside a prison cell, hoping it lands in the hands of someone who needs to know that there is no wrong kind of sinner. That there is more grace in the blood of Jesus than sin in you. That God heals anyone who wants to be healed — but He does it His way.

Your way doesn't work. I know. I tried mine for three decades.

His way worked. And it started when He put me in a box and said, "I've got you where I can deal with you now. You can't run."

Chapter 11: Wrong Kind of Sinner

As of May 2026, I am currently in prison.

I came into the system on October 13, 2021. I am parole eligible, but I have nowhere to go — so I am here until I find housing or until 2035, when I max out. That's the legal reality. It's not a cry for help. It's not an appeal for sympathy. It's just the truth.

From this cell, I do what I can. I write music. I work on a recovery program for addiction — all addiction — but focused through the lens of sexual brokenness, because that's the pit I was pulled from and that's the pit I know best. I sit with men who are fighting the same battles I fought. Most of them are drug addicts. In prison, you don't talk about sexual addiction. That can literally get you killed. So I talk to the drug addicts about drugs, and I talk to the ones who are ready about the deeper things when it's safe.

I tell them the truth: I was on crack thirty-five years ago. Hooked. Homeless. Alone. I've seen the darkness. I loved the numbness, but it came with a price. It took me away from myself and everything I loved.

I don't push. I don't preach. I just let them know someone in here understands. When they're ready, I'll be here.

Everyone in here knows my story. My charges. My past. I speak openly about it, because God has my six. Some cheer me on publicly. Some would stab me in the back if they had the chance. But I'm not here to win a popularity contest. I'm here to tell the truth. And the truth is that Jesus Christ pulled me out of a pit I dug with my own two hands, and He can do the same for anyone in here. Anyone out there. Anyone.

I've been rejected by the church. Told not to come early. Told to leave during the altar call. Told I was too dangerous for grace. I was unwanted by the unwanted — not fit to minister to drug addicts and prostitutes, because my sin was the wrong kind.

But I discovered something in a cell with twenty-three hours of silence and one Book. God doesn't label sinners the way the church does. He doesn't sort us into categories of acceptable and unacceptable. He doesn't see a sexual addict and say, "Come back when you've cleaned up." He sees a prisoner and says, "You're Mine."

I was called to preach at fourteen years old. I ran for thirty-four years. The call never went anywhere. I had just buried it under so much noise that I couldn't hear it anymore. It took a jail cell, a credit card with exactly $3,500, a pastor's rejection, and a year in protective custody to get me still enough to listen.

Now I'm listening. Now I'm building. Now I'm telling anyone who will hear: there is no wrong kind of sinner.

The church is afraid to talk about sexual sin. I understand why. It's uncomfortable. It's messy. It's everywhere — in the pews, in the pulpits, in the homes of the people who smile and shake hands on Sunday morning. It's easier to pretend it's not there. It's easier to welcome the alcoholic and cheer for the recovering drug addict while the sexual sinner sits in the back row, hiding a screen in his pocket, terrified that someone will find out.

But it's His church. Not ours. And He's not afraid of the mess.

If a pastor reads this book, I want him to do one thing this Sunday: acknowledge it. From the pulpit. Say the words. Tell the people in your congregation that sexual addiction is real, that it's destroying lives, and that the blood of Jesus is stronger than any chain — including the

ones you can't see. Trust God, not the checkbook. If some people leave, let them leave. Someone will replace them. It's His church.

I wrote a song called "Wrong Kind of Sinner." It's my testimony set to melody. The chorus asks the question I've been asking since the day I was told to leave before the altar call:

Why am I the wrong kind of sinner?
The one they can't fully embrace?
If Jesus cast demons and raised up the dead,
Can't He cure sexual sin and remove every trace?
I once was that sinner, bound tight in its grip,
But His blood broke the power — now I'm cured, I'm equipped.

The last line of the song is the last line of my story: *Such were some of us... but we were washed.*

First Corinthians 6:11. "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Such were some of you. Past tense. The old man is dead. The new man is alive. Not because of anything I did. Because of what He did.

I don't know what happens next. I don't know if I'll get out tomorrow or in 2035. I don't know if I'll ever preach from a pulpit or if my ministry will stay behind these walls. I don't know if the recovery program will become something bigger than a few pages of notes, or if the book you're holding will reach anyone beyond these pages.

But I know this: God takes good care of me, even when I can't see it. When I get out, He will provide. He always has. A credit card in the mail. A mother who said "come on." A cell that became a monastery. Grace upon grace upon grace.

There is more grace in the blood of Jesus than sin in you. No matter what the world says. No matter what the church says. No matter what the accusation is. No matter how long you've been running.

God heals anyone who wants to be healed. But He does it His way.

Your way doesn't work. I know. I tried mine for three decades.

His way worked. And it started when He put me in a box and said, "I've got you where I can deal with you now. You can't run."

I'm done running.

Epilogue

If you're reading this and you're where I was — hiding a screen, feeding an addiction, convinced you're the wrong kind of sinner — stop running. Stop hiding. The darkness can't heal you. Only the light can. And the light is not afraid of what's in you.

Face the pain. Accept what happened. Forgive the ones who hurt you. Forgive yourself. And let God show you who you really are — not the mask, not the addiction, not the pile of worthlessness you've created. The real you. The one He called before the foundation of the world. The one He chased for thirty-four years. The one He cornered in a cell because He loved you too much to let you keep running.

You are not the wrong kind of sinner. There is no wrong kind of sinner. There is only the blood of Jesus, and it is enough.

Resources

This book is not the end of the story. It's an invitation.

If you're struggling with sexual addiction — or any addiction — you don't have to fight alone. The same God who pulled me out of the pit is still in the business of pulling people out. And I'm still here, still building, still available.

Visit **www.wrongkindofsinner.com** for:

- **Free PDF of this book** — because money should never stand between a hurting person and help
- **Music and devotionals** — including the song "Wrong Kind of Sinner" and others written from the inside
- **Bible studies and sermons** — resources for going deeper
- **The recovery program** — a framework for healing that starts with the wound, not the behavior. For all addiction, focused through the lens of sexual brokenness
- **Contact** — a way to reach me directly

All at absolutely no cost.

If you're a pastor or church leader, there are resources for you too. A guide for starting the conversation about sexual addiction in your congregation. A printable outline of the recovery framework. A way to book me to speak — if and when God opens that door.

The website will be fully live soon. If you're reading this and it's not up yet, check back. It's coming. God is still writing the story.

About the Author

I was called to preach at fourteen. I ran for thirty-four years. God cornered me in a prison cell with one Book and twenty-three hours of silence, and I finally stopped running.

As of May 2026, I am still incarcerated. I am also still writing, still creating music, still building a recovery program, and still telling anyone who will listen that there is more grace in the blood of Jesus than sin in you.

This is my first book.

Wrong Kind of Sinner
There is no wrong kind of sinner.
There is only the blood of Jesus.
And it is enough.