

For by them doors opened that may not have otherwise been realized and they broadened my ability to understand scripture and grasp truths foreign to the natural or physical aspect of man. But then that was just my path and not something I recommend.

By the end of 1974, I had come to a place where I felt good about who I was and where I was going. I was just finishing up my military Advanced Individual Training, was drug and alcohol free, was in awesome physical condition, was back together with my estranged fiancée via letters and was preparing to ship off to Germany for three years. I was content on all levels. I had gained rank very quickly to PFC and was looking forward to marrying my sweetheart and going to Europe, then it happened.

It was almost one a.m. on a rather cool early October night at Ft. Lost in the Woods Misery, otherwise known as Ft. Leonard Wood, MO. I was drug and alcohol free and graduating from AIT in a couple weeks with a promotion waiting. I was walking back to the barracks from watching a very spiritual movie at the post theater by the name of "Blazing Saddles". Tongue in cheek there, just letting you know there was nothing immediately prompting the following events. On the way, just three buildings down from my barracks, was a chapel I had to pass to get to my bunk. I had never been in it as I had sworn off religion at the age of twelve because of the gross hypocrisy I saw in the one I was confirmed in. Yet, as I approached the building I had this overwhelming urge to go inside. Now every G.I. knows that all buildings are to be secured if unoccupied particularly after dark and there were no lights on or anything else to suggest that it was occupied. I went and tried the front door anyway, it was not locked so I went in. I called out to see if anyone was there and got no response. Inside were very dim security lights throughout the entry way and sanctuary. I entered the sanctuary and sat down in the back row of pews. I sat down feeling as

though I was there to meet someone and several minutes later moved to the front row still feeling the same. The next thing that happened was very unusual for me as I had not been raised in a church that gave altar calls or invitations to come forward for anything. I found myself sitting in a yoga position, something familiar to me, directly in front of the podium. Within a few moments I went to a kneeling position which was uncommon and then it happened. With eyes closed, expecting for someone to greet me at any moment, I saw crystal clear before me a large screen as if in a movie theater. The opening scene was not familiar yet I recognized the children in it. It was me at three years old in a sandbox at my grandparents house in Florida with a three year old girl from next door. She had evidently done something I didn't like and I viciously slapped her in the face as hard as I could, sending her crying back to her house. I broke into uncontrolled sobbing expressing my sorrow for having done such a horrible thing. At twenty years old I had no recollection of this ever happening and learned several years later when I shared this experience with my grandmother that it had happened just as I saw it on the screen, but it didn't stop there. I sobbed like this for three consecutive hours watching before me, from that event up to present, every mean or selfish thing I had ever done to anyone repeating over and over again how sorry I was for each thing I saw on the screen. At four A.M. I was exhausted from the intense sobbing yet felt as though a great weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. It was a high better than any drug had ever provided and I was giddy with joy. The only thing I was absolutely certain of concerning this experience was that it had to do with Jesus Christ and the Bible. That morning I was at the PX waiting for it to open so I could purchase a Bible and begin to figure out what just happened to me. For the very first time ever what I was reading made sense to me. It was as though the Bible had come alive and was helping me to understand it. I was unable to contain myself and began sharing, somewhat overbearingly, this

experience and what I was reading in scripture with all of my peers. They all thought I had taken one hit too many of LSD and just scoffed at me. I had no explanation to give, just an experience I could not deny. Although I believe I experienced both revelation and forgiveness through repentance I cannot actually claim this to be a true conversion experience. I did not at that time commit my life to Christ. That happened eighteen months later in Mannheim Germany, after three Article 15's, a courts martial and pending a second courts martial. Four young men in uniform singled me out for prayer, daily for three months, until I was converted. They got what they asked for and I got what I was searching so long for; a living loving relationship with the creator of all things, God, my Heavenly Father. Let's just say what happened in AIT was a stepping stone leading to my eventual conversion. One that I could not discount nor deny. It was as real as this tract you are currently reading and a pivotal point in my life.