

FROM HONOR ROLL TO ADDICT by Brian Frederick Holley

Here I was again sick, having cold sweats, fever, and muscle spasms, along with restlessness and bouts of vomiting. I hadn't slept in days. Every molecule in my body was hurting, my legs kicking uncontrollably. I was in pain again. How many times have I been here only to think, "If I just have one more hit, I will be all right." Yes, I could hardly get out of bed and walk, but the anxiety was making me crazy—it was pure torment. I knew if I could just find some more I would feel better instantly. Why do I keep kidding myself? It just keeps happening over and over. What I thought would make me feel good turned on me; what a curse.

I was once a bright-eyed boy full of dreams. I wanted to play professional ball. I loved playing football and basketball. I did gymnastics and loved to run. I was the fastest kid in school. I ran the 50 yard dash in 4.9 seconds and the 600 yard dash in 1 minute and 35 seconds. I was on the honor roll and got good grades; everything was fine. I had a good life at home, was brought up right, was taught the Bible, went to church, and loved going to the Feast. I was happy—like I said, I had a good life.

I look back and think, *What happened to me?* At school I wanted to be cool, I looked up to what I thought were the cool kids. They were the ones that had the long hair, the ones that smoked and acted up in class. I started hanging around with them and acting up. Just doing everything they did so they would say that I was cool, too. That's when drugs entered the picture. At first, it was simply marijuana. Nothing seemed wrong with just a little pot, or so I thought at the time. I smoked a little before and after school, and soon I realized my grades were slipping. I wasn't interested in running or playing sports. I lost every little bit of drive; I just wanted to get high and hang out. I used to think people were wrong when they said pot was a gateway drug to harder drugs, but I came to see it was. I started trying LSD, cocaine—you name it, I was doing it.

I dropped out of school, got a job, got married, and had two kids. During all that time, I was drinking and drugging. I lost countless jobs because I was lazy and had no ambition. I would not show up because I just wanted to party and hang out with my friends. This was my life from early teens to a married adult with children. I ended up losing my wife and children, my home, my car, and my job.

The last straw was when I started working for a close friend of mine who had an addiction to heroin. He offered some to me and since I hadn't tried that, I went for it. I thought that stuff was great until I didn't have any and needed some more to keep from getting sick. I was doing some every day before and after work, and before long I was a full-fledged addict with a bundle a day habit (that's roughly 100 dollars a day). I have gone to rehabs. I kicked it cold turkey, which was pure torment. I've slipped and relapsed and got straight many times, sometimes just wishing I could die so I wouldn't end up back on it again. I would end up living on the street, sleeping on top of buildings, and cleaning up in public bathrooms. I had no car. I walked everywhere. I lost everything.

Recently, I had a girl in rehab that I was falling in love with. I thought there might be some hope for us. I had stopped using, but she relapsed after a year of being clean. She overdosed in my arms. I tried, but couldn't save her. I wanted to end my life. I desperately wanted freedom from this curse of addiction. Every day was nothing but dread, depression, and despair. Every day I wondered how I was going to get my fix so I would not be sick. It's no longer a matter of enjoying getting high, but rather of avoiding withdrawal. This is an evil drug that has stolen my soul and has controlled my life. I lost friends, my wife, and a girl I loved. I long for a relationship with my son. I long for a family, and I've lost all that.

I thank God for my daughter. Unfortunately, she also has become addicted to drugs. I feel it is my fault entirely. I did get her into rehab, and she now helps me to stay straight, and I help her. She is my life, and I pray that she succeeds and is finally happy. I want to live now so that I can help her; I don't want to fail her. If this life of mine and what I've been through can help anyone not make the mistakes I have made, then it would have been worth it. If it keeps one person from starting to smoke pot or take any drug, then I feel I didn't go through this for nothing. Please don't do what I have done. I still fight every day and I need prayers to help me stay strong for my daughter. Thank God for her and the encouragement from all those who have helped me.