

## **My Testimony**

by Deno Anthony Berlongieri

I was born on July 21, 1960 in Chicago, Illinois. At the age of 2 years, My parents divorced. It wasn't a good childhood, living in that type of environment. My mother had remarried when I was 6 years old to a man that drove a semi-truck for Jay's Potato Chips.

I was the middle child of 3, and it was hard on all of us kid's at the same time. Alcohol and violent behavior is what I remember but God had a plan for me, even though I was 6 years old. A church bus would come from Hammond, Indiana to pick us up for Bible School, and I always looked forward for that special day. This was the beginning of my Christian life, and at the age of 9, I was saved and baptized.

Life at home never got better and at 11 years old, I had a small bump on the back of my head. In one month it grew to the size of a jumbo egg, feeding off the main artery to my brain. My neuro-surgeon had said 6 weeks longer and I would have died from it. God took control of everything and back then I remember always having a great sense of peace inside.

When I became 12 years old, we moved to the south suburbs and out of Chicago. I was made fun of because of having to wear a nylon over my head to protect the incision and the associated plate. Also my name isn't very common so I was picked on by a few bullies. Things changed when my hair grew back and I was involved with athletic activities and wasn't bothered too much afterward. God always protected me.

I found Love as a young man on the streets with my friend's because I had none from home. I started to live a different life, and it was one that God wouldn't approve of. As I became an adult, at the age of 23 years old, I met my old girlfriend at a club. I remember the light in her eyes. It lit up my world. God had blessed me with a wife who was also my best friend. She became the mother of our 3 children.

I was always interested with working on cars, and that's how I made my living. Time was passing by quickly, and, as we got older, and I look back at how much wasted time I spent away from my kid's, because of long working hours (I did this so my wife wouldn't have too.) But I look back and even though I made a good living, I forgot about thanking the Lord by tithing and going to church. God had a different plan that I want to tell you about. It only took a matter of time until something tragic happened and I would totally surrender to God, Jesus my Savior, and The Holy Spirit, and on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1997 that happened.

At work a whole car came off a fork lift that I was under and crushed my entire body. At first I was in shock and couldn't move, then felt a relief of pressure and rolled out from under the car. The owner of the business was there and thought I was killed until I started cussing. Then he picked up the rear bumper which caused a see-saw effect allowing me to get out. The pain and all the surgeries were indescribable, and for 3 years I asked God to take me because I couldn't live like that anymore. After surrendering to God once again, He started making thing's better, and easier.

My spiritual growth had become so powerful with The Lord and I was filled with the Holy Spirit. Once I spoke in a language that my wife had never heard: while asleep. I was speaking with the Lord in tongues. After I awoke and was told what I did, I didn't remember anything, but felt different inside. As years passed I felt God so close to me in Spirit that it's hard to describe. The cold weather living in Illinois was taking a toll on me and Cheryl knew I had to live in a warm climate.

And so, God brought us to Land O Lakes, Florida where we could serve God according to his Great Plan and not ours. Today I can say that everyday is a gift from God, to use and to serve him, according to our calling. As it was written in Matthew 6:19 thru 24, lay up treasures in heaven:

- 19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.
- 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.
- 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!
- 24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.