

A STORY OF HOPE MEET COLE

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Growing up in the small town of Trempealeau, WI, was a joy. My dad, a true motorhead, taught me to ride ATVs and dirt bikes by age six. However, life took a dramatic turn in 2004 when my dad had a snowmobile accident, hitting a frozen dirt pile at 100 mph. The crash nearly killed him, crushing everything inside. From a young age, I wholeheartedly believed that God saved my dad's life, even though I was raised agnostic and knew little about God.

Despite the challenges, my early years were filled with fun, but they also introduced me to the harsh realities of addiction. My dad developed an addiction to pain medication following his accident, and my mom struggled with alcoholism. Yet, they still supported my passion for racing ATVs and dirt bikes.

As I entered my teenage years, I began smoking weed and hosting massive parties at our house despite not drinking myself. I was also a state wrestler and team captain, the only kid in the region to go to state in 2014.

Although my dad eventually overcame his opioid addiction, my mom's alcoholism continued, creating a difficult home environment. Our relationship was good when she was sober but terrible when she was drunk.

I started smoking weed at 16, always telling myself it would be the only drug I used. But by 19, I had started drinking heavily, especially in the construction and concrete industry, where drinking was common.

My drinking escalated to consuming alcohol from sunup to sundown. My alcoholism was far beyond the average drinker's consumption. I then added the use of cocaine and meth to the mix.

At first, I thought my life in addiction was normal. It was not until my health began deteriorating that I realized the extent of my problem. Drinking 30 cans of beer a day led to early-stage cirrhosis of the liver by age 26, and I was hospitalized over ten times. Despite trying to get sober four times, I felt hopeless and lost.

Before my admission to ATC of Milwaukee in August 2023, I was homeless and hopeless in Waupaca, WI. After four unsuccessful attempts at secular treatments, I decided to try ATC. However, I initially had no intention of committing to the program. It was not until I left and continued seeking the Lord that I truly felt His presence and love.

My first 90 days at ATC in Milwaukee were transformative. I felt the love of a Christian community, but my heart was not in the program. I planned to do my 90 days and leave the program. It was not until I left ATC Milwaukee that I started to develop a relationship with God.

In January 2024, after six months of sobriety, I relapsed again and reached a breaking point, crying out to God to take my life. But God responded with a clear “No,” urging me to return to the Adult & Teen Challenge (ATC).

This is when I finally committed and began my journey with Adult & Teen Challenge Northeastern Wisconsin (**ATCNEW**).

Since coming to **ATCNEW**, my connection with the Lord has grown stronger daily, and I frequently feel His presence and loving hands guiding me.

I am convinced that God has a plan for me and that I can achieve lifelong sobriety through Him. I hope to fulfill His calling on my life and embrace His plans for me, including potentially serving as a staff member for ATC. I also hope to use my construction skills in overseas missions.

My life will go wherever God calls me.

