

# Once a Loser, Now a Winner

By Everett Wayne

The addiction to gambling cost me much more than material loss, it robbed me of self-worth and every good thing.

Thank God for Calvary and for what Jesus can do for a sinner. I used to be one of the orneriest old rascals that ever walked this earth. I had gotten about as low in sin as anyone could get—I was an old bum who wasn't any good to myself or anyone else. Gambling had cursed my life and broken up my home. Most of my life was spent in the beer joints and around the card tables, but I can well remember the night that my life changed.



As I sat at the card table that night, God talked to me. He said, "Old feller, except you do something, you're a goner!" I could understand that. I knew the Almighty was speaking to my heart. I pushed the pack of cards across the table for the last time, got up from that card game—something I never did before unless I was broke—and left that place. I've never been back, not even to say good-bye. Today I have a different story to tell.

## The Light of the World

That night, I remembered seeing the sign on the Apostolic Faith Church building which said, "Jesus, the Light of the World." Thank God, He is the Light of the world! I had walked past that sign many times when I was on the bum, drunk, and running from the law or something like that. Today that sign is worth millions to me. I had never been inside the Apostolic Faith Church, but God said, "This is the place for you to go." I went right to the church, passing up every beer joint along the way.

When I reached the church, I went up the stairs into their meeting hall and sat down. I could hardly wait until the service was over so I could go to the altar. I had on dirty clothes and was dressed like a tramp, but I knew God could do something for me. I knelt at their altar. Not one of the Apostolic Faith people knew me, but they gathered around me and prayed earnestly that God would have mercy on me and save me. I prayed also, as I had never prayed in my life. I meant business with God, and He gave me an honest heart. I had never been honest before. If I told the truth, it was for some kind of gain. Usually I lied, but that night I got honest before God.

## A Honest Cry

I said, "God, be merciful to me, a wretched sinner." I knew I was a sinner. My sins caught up with me everywhere until there was no place to turn. I knew there was a God and that I would have to face Him someday, and I knew if I didn't send my sins on ahead of me, they would condemn my soul for the rest of eternity.

God heard my prayer and answered. The booze habit fell off, and the desire for cigarettes was gone when God saved me. He broke those habits in a moment of time. I had committed unspeakable sins, but when Jesus came in, a mighty change was wrought in this heart and life of mine. God took sin completely out of me, and from that day on, I haven't had sin in my life.

I met God that day, and He saved me and gave me something to praise Him for. It takes the power of God to clean up a man like I was and take sin out of his life. God changed my nature. A night or two after the Lord saved me, a wonderful thing happened. I started home feeling good in spirit, and on Fifth and Washington Streets, there was a traffic mishap. A couple of young people had been drinking and they were going to fight. I thought I would stop them, but they started in on me. I was a man who had fought all my life, but that night I couldn't raise a hand. All I could think was, I am a Christian; I can't do this. I went down twice, but there was no hatred in my heart and I didn't want to get up and fight them. Ordinarily I would have gotten up and gone right into the middle of them. That showed me the power of God in my life right then.

## Fixing Up the Past

My past life was well covered up. A loner, I pulled the stunts by myself so there wouldn't be anyone to squeal on me. But God sent me back over my past life, and I straightened things up that would have put me behind prison bars for the balance of my life. Stealing had been my way of living. I committed every kind of sin except murder, and I had that in my heart. I went to a railroad company here in Portland and confessed to robbing their boxcars back in Idaho. I confessed to armed robbery in Utah and to forgery in Wyoming. I thought I would get arrested and sent to prison—in fact, when I saw my police record, I didn't think it possible that I had done all the things they had against me. I had even outlawed myself with the government, having deserted both the Army and the Navy, and I was a man without a country. I confessed to the government that I had stolen guns and clothing from them and that I was a deserter. I had lost my citizenship, but God restored it, reinstated me, and gave me a new lease on life. I not only have my citizenship papers today, but I am also a citizen of Heaven.

Once in a while, as I look out on the skid road, I recognize a face I used to know; and a prayer goes up from my heart for that man. Before I was saved, I had the wrong master, and believe me, he took me through some awful places. Today I don't have to sneak around the corners to see if the law is looking for me. I have a clear conscience and a clean life. God, through the prayers of His people, has done that for me. I have joy, peace, and victory in this heart of mine because God is in it.

Since God saved me, I have been contented. I can't do slack work anymore. I never worked on a job in my life more than a few days, unless I was in jail. Today I have worked on one job for many years. I am never out of money anymore either.

I was hardly living at all before I came to the Lord, but things are different now. The peace of God fills my heart today, and I thank Him!

*Everett Wayne was a member of the Apostolic Faith Church for many years. He faithfully served on the street missionary teams that told others of the life-changing power in the Gospel. He has now gone on to his reward.*