

Racing

in the wrong direction

By Court Durkalski

For this drag racer, living in the fast lane nearly cost him everything

From my days as an altar boy and all the way through high school, no one would have looked at me and said, “That’s a bad kid.” Raised by strict parents, I was taught the value of hard work, honor and dedication.

But upon graduating from high school my life took a dangerous detour. I moved into my own apartment and started hanging out with a group of people who consumed lots of alcohol and used drugs.

About that same time, my father bought a company, Truline Industries, that manufactured jet parts. The Ohio-based company proved to be highly lucrative, so I started working there and was paid more money than most kids my age. I used the money to buy alcohol and cars, including a supercharged Corvette I raced at a local drag strip.

After my parents bought me a “funny car,” I began racing on the National Hot Rod Association circuit. As with most professional sports, there were lots of drugs and women around as temptations.

I was truly living in the fast lane. For four years, I flew all over the country to compete in drag races. In each city, I stayed in expensive hotels and hopped from one nightclub to another in Lamborghinis

and Ferraris. When I look back now, it is sad how much money I wasted. My cocaine habit alone was costing me \$1,000 per week.

Finally my self-indulgent lifestyle, alcoholism and deception caught up with me: I lost my marriage. Regardless of a painful divorce, I continued using drugs and lusting after every deviant thing the world had to offer.

In 1987 I paid a visit to a travel agent, intending to book a vacation to any place where the parties lasted through the night. Instead, the attractive travel agent invited me to accompany her on a cruise to the Caribbean. I was afraid of getting caught with cocaine in another country, so I convinced myself not to take any of the substance with me. On the cruise and temporarily off drugs, I began to see my life with greater clarity, suddenly realizing I needed to do everything possible to reconcile with the woman who had been my fiancée.

Upon returning from the cruise, it occurred to me that God might help me get my fiancée back. In an attempt to earn His help, I went to a bookstore and bought three versions of the Bible and began reading them in parallel fashion. By the time I had read from Genesis to the Book of John, I knew I was

lost and needed salvation. Alone in my living room, I confessed my sin, surrendered my life to Jesus and made Him my Lord and Savior. That day I was also supernaturally delivered from cocaine and alcohol.

The years of never being satisfied and always seeking more pleasure instantly came to an end. The void in my life was replaced by a deep love

for God. The distractions in my life — such as Porsches and parties — also faded in importance. I just knew I needed more of Jesus.

A few days later I heard that a former defensive end for the Detroit Lions and Cleveland Browns, Bill Glass, was holding an evangelistic crusade. I attended the first night, and then invited my father to come the second night. At the close of the service, he rededicated his life to Christ. My mother, who seldom left the house due to some emotional issues, agreed to join us for the final night of the crusade.



Court and Amy with sons Trevor (left) and Aaron



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It was one of the greatest miracles I have ever witnessed when she stood to her feet and responded to the altar call in front of 5,000 people.

In God's providence, that night we met Pastor Stefan Sawczak, who was planting an Assemblies of God church near our home. My father offered to donate land to him if he ever wanted to build a church. In the meantime, my father said, the congregation of Chester Christian Center could meet at our company's facility.

Shortly after my conversion, I sensed God was calling me into the ministry. With Pastor Stefan's mentoring, living for God and knowing Him became my mission in life. After my fiancée rejected

my efforts to reconcile, the Lord began to speak to me about attending Bible college. The next semester I enrolled at Valley Forge Christian College.

VFCC was a life-changing educational and spiritual experience. The chapel services and classroom opportunities helped shape me into a true follower of Christ. While attending the college, I also met Amy, a godly woman who became my wife.

During my senior year at VFCC, my family suffered a devastating tragedy: My younger brother, Dean, was killed by a drunken driver. We were still dealing with the pain of his passing when my father asked me to consider coming back to Truline Industries

to help him run the company. At first, it didn't seem to make sense because I was preparing for a preaching ministry. In time, however, it became apparent the company was the pulpit God had for me. In time my father turned the reins of the business over to me as CEO.

Today, as a husband and father of two teenage boys, I realize my family is my most important congregation. I must model Christlike principles to both my family and my employees. In other words, how I live my life must be a reflection of what I preach. As a business leader, I must demonstrate that I value relationships more than financial statements. Some companies say, "Leave your problems at

home." Here, we say, "Bring your problems in — we want to pray with you and point you to principles that can help you overcome."

I have grown to see work as worship. We honor God by how we conduct ourselves at work and how we run our businesses. Too often people try to leave God out of the workplace. That's where we spend a significant amount of our time. God needs to reign over that part of our lives, too. We should look forward to coming to work because of the opportunities God gives us to glorify Him in the marketplace.

There were many years when church was not a part of my life. For that reason, today the church is huge for me. It's not a building

or an organization; it's the body of Christ working and praying together to further the Kingdom. What an amazing privilege to experience God's grace together in a church setting.

God's grace accepted me as I was. I tell the men I teach at Teen Challenge that if God can forgive me, He can forgive them. I was as far away from God as a person can get, but He found me. I was running with the rich and famous and on a continual quest for pleasure, but God never gave up on me. He knew there was coming a day when I would recognize that without Him in my life I was going nowhere fast. **tpe**

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

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To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.
 "There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.
 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.
 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.
 "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.
 "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

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