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I did not know why, but I discovered what.

I've fallen 70 times. For decades I battled Addictions of ALL SORTS, mostly Alcohol. It wasn't till I admitted my deep pain and woundedness was what fueled my NEVER ending quest to get higher & higher & higher that freedom came to be a possibility.

This is not about ALL my struggles, but about ONE specific day. I was about 30 yrs old. I'd violated parole... AGAIN. I was put back on a prison yard where I'd been saved, had served, had preached. SHAME, GUILT, DESPERATION CONSUMED ME.

I ~~was~~ hung my head and walked back into the Chapel in which I'd been blessed to serve Him for years before my shameful fall. Opening that door was hard. REAL hard. I grabbed a "FREE ON THE INSIDE BIBLE" and the first book that came to hand; "WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE". Then I got out of there fast.

At 10:30 A.M. I went back into my CELL in 5 Building. CELL 115. I read Psalm 23 & 51 - I think that was it, and tried to pray. My prayer seemed

to hit the ~~ceiling~~ ceiling roof and fall to the floor. Dear God did I hurt in that moment. I felt He had forsaken me as I so richly deserved. I wrapped the Bible & Book in a t-shirt, stuffed all my state issued property in my Lg. plastic bag and hit the yard.

I found Psycho, the shot-caller for the Holly-wood skinheads. He was the dope man on the yard. I told him God had cut me off, I was done with all that. SLOB, Dago SLOB was back! (that's who I was - the old man).

He welcomed me with open arms, kicked out his cellie and together we pressured the yd clerk to move me from 1-5-115L to 1-3-239 - Psycho's cell.

I moved my property over at 2pm - just 1 Lg bag of state clothes. (Bible & Book wrapped in a t-shirt). Then I went out to the yard to see who was calling shots for Dago Mob - the Hells Angel affiliates. My plan was to claim power. God would not have me. I was going back.

Yard recall I entered my new cell. Psycho's. He was already home, sitting on the desk, a loaded Hypo of heroin

waiting for me.

I shut the door. The door popped open. I shut it again. It popped open again. Sticking my head out, a G/O called up to me: "RUSSELL, the Lt REVERSED your MOVE. He knows you PRESSURED his CLERK. Get you AS - back to 5 Building - NOW. LEAVE your property. I'll send it later."

ENTERING 5 Building I was told I was NOT going back to my ORIGINAL CELL - 115 - but to 140.

I got in there. NO ONE ELSE LIVED there AND FROM ALL THE DUST AND COB WEBS it SEEMED NO ONE HAD IN A WHILE. I WAS RAGGING MAD! NOW DARE THEY MESS WITH ME!

CALLING A PORTER OVER I ORDERED him to bring ME CLEANSER, A BUCKET, AND RAGS SO I COULD CLEAN THE CELL. I got what I wanted, got on my KNEES to CLEAN. Looked UNDER the bed, back in the CORNER WAS A MASS of trash and dust bunnies.

UNDER ALL THAT I found 3 things. I found A tree on the INSIDE Bible. I found A book. "WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE. (THOSE 2 COPIES. THE ONE STILL WRAPPED in my t-shirt

OVER AT Psycho's, and the discovered under that book ARE the ONLY 2 copies of that book I'VE EVER SEEN!) The other thing I found WAS AN ASSURANCE, A FAITH, A God who NEVER, EVER, SAYS WE'RE DONE.

DEAR God did I weep!! The Glory of God, THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD filled that cell that night.

I didn't know why, but I found What.

That's Who my God IS!!

In the many years since, I'VE often stumbled, fallen even. But I'VE NEVER for a moment considered leaving His Kingdom and re-entering the world.

~~The Angel told those who were at the tomb; "Tell the my~~

Christ told these women, tell my disciples and peter (after he had denied Him 3 times!) I AM RISEN!

Our Lord will NEVER run out of "and Russ's". He's A God of SECOND CHANCES. LET Him give you one too.

God BLESS you.

NUM. 6:24-26

Russ Gal 2:20

P.S. NO, I NEVER did do that herion ☺