

Robert A. Russell V35292
CSP SQ 3-N-17 Low
San Quentin, CA 94974

The Beginning

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There is much I've kept to myself that I am lead to share. Today is the beginning of a brand new portion of my journey. All of my life has lead me here, now. I have been keeping a journal for about five years now. Let me start this post by transcribing a portion of yesterday's entry.

"Significant counsel from God today during my meditations. It was revealed to me that I live on one side of a great divide. I exist, at least in my own mind, in "The Land of Poverty". Life in this land is one of struggle. It's a land of need, desparation, dependence, and dispair at one end of the spectrum. A land of 15% above minimum wage, RV living, and hopelessness on the other. Fact is, that's where I am at realistically. God has shown me that there exist another land. It's right on the other side of that divide. It's "A Land of True and Realistic Opportunity".

He showed me how He has lead me from one end of the spectrum to the other over here in the land of poverty. And That alone was His work and a miracle! But I now stand on the precipice of that divide. In order to continue on my journey a bridge must be built. He showed me how those S.M.A.R.T. goals He gave me last month, covering the last of my time incarcerated, is the blueprint for that bridge! That document He helped me create is the framework upon which the bridge will be built.

The individual goals are the building blocks of the roadway across the divide. That I must work, being careful to focus only on the work so that the bridge carries not only myself across, but also all those He plans to lead across it through me. It is so tempting to gaze across to the other side now, to dream and plan, but He tells me all of that belongs to Him and is not my business. My business is to obey and to WORK! The work, that's mine, and He has spent a decade

preparing and equipping me for this work. His command and my duty is to focus on the work, to do it carefully and diligently so that the bridge will stand.

So, that is my mandate. Be careful to stay focused and to not give into temptation to micromanage the job at hand- He's already given me the blueprint, The Work is mine to do."

The meaning of all this will become clearer as I continue. Now if all of this was about me, it's value, even to me, would be negligible. But it is not. Here's some background for you. Two years back, after a true dark night of the soul experience, God gave me three legs to stand on, three mandates for my life: #1 - Praise, worship, and honor Him with all my being. #2 - Show everyone how much He loves them. #3 - I am to work with my hands to provide for my own needs and the needs of others.

The true depth of these mandates continues to be revealed. The bridge will be built because I need to know how it is done so I can go and teach others. The wealth will be created because it is sorely needed for "the least of these". (As the world labels the destitute and homeless) Men, women, and children are out there right this minute! They're sitting on sidewalks, without hope, filthy, and truly experiencing a HELL only those who have been there can even begin to imagine! Guess what? I'VE BEEN THERE! ENOUGH! Nothing will stop Us, me and Him, from going to them! Nothing! People think addiction is the problem, and it is. Fact: Poverty Breeds Addiction!

Now I can and will do the work-diligently, conscientiously, and thoroughly. But although I have the ability to do the work and the blueprint needed to get it done, I've about run out of materials. At this point it is about tuition and books. Please pray with me that my trust that materials will materialize continues in the face of overwhelming facts to the contrary. It seems so so impossible. But then again, my whole life today is about impossibility. The fact that I am clean and sober and so full of joy I can barely stand it is impossible. With man. Amen.

In faith I submitted my application to Adams State University in Colorado. I am able to transfer with 90 of the units I have already completed, meaning that I only lack 30 units for that Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration, with an emphasis in Real Estate. My academic plan also has me, as part of those same 30 units, earning my paralegal certification.

You see the vision of my life is, in many ways, all about housing. The actual Business plan is about real estate development, refurbishing ~~houses~~^{MES} to sell, bringing value to the market place while generating wealth to fund the non-profit called "No Conditions", a homeless outreach center and ministry whose mission will be to escort others over the divide. My absolute passion for this is beyond measure! The ultimate goal of the business end will be to acquire rental properties which will become the property of "No Conditions", used to fund the center. This is to be a model for replication in other urban centers around the country and world. Are you thinking "ridiculous pipedream"? I smile big as I tell you that's exactly what I been telling Him! :) But He has this thing He does, He Smiles Back! Truth be told I have oft found this to be irritating.

I have not, mostly do not, discuss this vision with those in my life because it's scoffed at, if not straight ridiculed. Just recently I've been told "You can't expect anything more than a minimum wage job at best". That is absolutely reasonable. It just so happens that God is quite often unreasonable. I am troubled by the thought of going forward, leaving those who can't get on board behind. I, at times lately, feel so all alone, but then God...amen. Those people on the sidewalk, existing in their own filth in a unimaginable HELL? NO MORE! GET BEHIND ME!!

Now I have spent this last ten years or so, since He gave me the full "No Conditions" concept, explaining to Him how it can't work. Didn't He know I was broken, deeply and profoundly? That I was a three time loser, and an addict? That I had nightmares surrounding the loss of my family that had me waking to a lava bath many times each month? I was not the one! He smiled. I made my RV plans and brought them to Him. He smiled. I worked

a plan where I could live on nothing much, save for a plot of land to park my RV on and still be able to purchase peanutbutter sandwiches to feed the homeless with. He smiled. While I was doing all this explaining and planning, He was doing what He does, which is exceedingly above and beyond we can ever imagine.

During all this time He lead me to counselors, even two awesome psychologist who He used to fixed that "profound brokenness". He lead me to a HARD, ROCK HARD bottom that lead to sobriety which lead to full on recovery. He lead me to Bible College that I might learn to study. He lead my mother to recommend "real college". He lead me to Restorative Justice that I might gain understanding, and ultimately, healing. Recently He oh so gently tapped me on the shoulder as I was busy, and asked me about those reasons why. I had no trouble beginning that discussion! But one by one I saw He had already done the impossible, that my very soul was healed, addiction a thing of the past, nightmares a distant memory, three college degrees already earned. He smiled. I wept, and do weep at this minute because the thank'ful joy which consumes my being threatens to transport me here and now. Oh, God Is Good loved one!

So now, I stand at the beginning of the next part of such a wonderful journey. I've entitled this post "The Beginning" because it is. I leave behind that land of poverty and pain. I invite you to follow along on the next stage and with me to be Amazed, absolutely amazed, at what He will do!

Next time I will post a copy of the blueprint for that bridge He gave me, the S.M.A.R.T. goals and I will invite you to hold me accountable to the work, amen. - MAYBE?

God bless us all, amen. Let's get it done people, time is a wastin!

In Crist,
I remain,

Russ

Russ (Jn. 8:31,32)

P.S. WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE PRINT + SEND ME A COPY

