

My Story



Jan Schoonraad

On the 18th of June 2009 I was busy sharing my testimony with my friend Victor Myburgh at work. I was telling him about my life and how Jesus saved me from destruction and death. I told him where I was in my life, all the mistakes I made, and the challenges I went through. I shared with him the healing process and journey that I went through with our Lord and the promises He gave me through godly people and prophets, that God told me that His will for me is good, and that I should focus on what He had in mind for me.

Vic was listening attentively to all that I was saying, and then after I had finished, thinking that I have talked too much and overwhelmed him, he surprised me with the following words: Jan, you must write a book on your life experiences, it should be used as a guide for men that doesn't know God, this story will be a testimony that anything is possible for God! I was so surprised on what he was saying that I only looked at him. My life story wasn't that important or that significant, I mean if you listen to Uncle Angus Buchan or Des Sinclair's testimonies and their life stories, then my life experiences was boring! But the Holy Spirit stirred this idea in my heart, and I knew that I must do it. He also instructed me that I must write a book and this book must be written in English..., it was then that I knew it was definitely coming from Him! You see, I am a "boertjie" (Afrikaans) and the "foreign language" doesn't come that easy to me! So, the Lord must really help me with writing the book!

At the time I didn't know what my purpose or calling was, but later in my life I realized that the Lord wanted to use me in Africa, and that I obviously had to minister in English.

(Early days)

My name is Jan and I want to tell you my life story.

Why? Because the Lord instructed me to do so, and He said that everyone that will read this story or testimony, will have an amazing experience with the Holy Spirit, not because of me, but because He has a plan to use this testimony, a story of impossibilities becoming possible, a story of healing and deliverance.

I had wonderful parents who loved us and who tried their best to give us all we needed to become successful. We; my two elder sisters and younger brother were blessed to have them as our parents.

They taught us manners, to respect other people, to be consistent and to work hard. The most important thing I learned from them is Love, they loved each other, and they loved us dearly.

Schoonraad family

Me



Writing this story, I have no intension to blame or hurt anyone for anything, I am just telling my story as good as I can remember and how I experienced it. This story is a testimony of God's goodness, He wants everyone to be saved, He wants everyone to get healed and to live a life of prosperity and victory.

He can take a nobody like me and empowered me to become someone that He is proud of. I am not boasting about anything – God saved me and blessed me, and all glory to Him!

Looking back at my life, the one thing that stands out and what had a huge impact on my life and what I can clearly remember even today, was being a lonely and scared little boy in a boarding school. The school was in a town called Pietersburg in the Limpopo province. (I was six years old at the time) My dad was transferred to a new mining project in Botswana our neighbouring country. This meant that our family had to relocate from South Africa to Selebi Pikwe in Botswana. The nearest Afrikaans School was in Pietersburg South Africa. So, my parents decided to send us (My two elder sisters and I) to boarding school in Pietersburg. They had no other choice.

Except that it was the first time that I was going to school, I also had the challenge that my parents weren't there to introduce me to the school and to comfort me.

No one to tell me - don't worry you will be ok; I am here for you. I had to start this journey on my own and I was missing my mom and dad dearly!

Later in my life the Lord shown me that it was in this time that the enemy came to me and told me that my parents deserted me and that they didn't care for me and that they didn't love me. This lie I believed, caused so much pain and challenges in my life growing up.

During the time at boarding school, we only went home over school holidays, and that was four times a year. For a little six-year-old it was hard, and I was miserable all the time.

One thing that made life bearable in the boarding school was when my uncle came once a month to pick us up to spend the weekend on his farm. He stayed on a farm near Vivo, about an hour's drive away from Pietersburg. I remember visiting the farm and when the weekend was over and we were returning to school, I cried and begged my uncle not to leave me at the boarding school.

Life at the boarding school was challenging, especially when you get sick or hurt, you just have to deal with it.

It started off with a cough, then headaches, my whole body was hurting, until the matron picked up that I wasn't well. She took me to the doctor, and I was diagnosed with pneumonia, she was kind enough to take me into her home and cared for me until I was better. I was longing for my mother and missed my parents so much, but the holiday was still months away.

My dad, working as a shaft sinker, moved a lot between projects, so after ten months working in Botswana, he had to move back to South Africa starting up another project at Durnacol in KwaZulu Natal. I was so glad and excited that my parents were moving back to South Africa. However, we still had to stay in boarding school until the end of that year, the prospect of living a normal life again was wonderful.

After working for a few months in Durnacol, we moved to Orkney in the old Western Transvaal, and for the first time in my life I was a happy little boy, being at home and not in a boarding school. But our stay in Orkney didn't last for too long (four month's) when my dad was transferred to a small town-Gravelotte in the Northern Transvaal. Again, my sisters and I had to go to boarding school because the school was too far from the mining site to travel in daily. This school was much better than the one in Pietersburg, but I still missed my parents, and couldn't wait for the weekends to come. I remember one afternoon I was playing rugby after school; I was in grade two and tried to tackle a grade seven boy,

resulting in hurting my left arm. I left the field crying, looking for my sisters because my arm was swollen and painful. Only later that afternoon I found them, and they took me to the matron on duty who called my parents. I was taken to the local doctor and x-rays shown that my arm was broken.

We stayed in Gravelotte for two and a half years when my dad had was transferred again, this time to Welkom in the Free State Province. For the following two years we moved a lot as my dad was transferred to various projects – Carletonville, Fochville, Grootvlei and Elandsrand.

My primary school time was remembered as the loneliest time of my life, staying in boarding schools without my parents without being there for me, no-one to help with the daily challenges like schoolwork, no-one to comfort me when I got hurt. That was one of the reasons that caused me to become a quiet, lonely little boy with no confidence and without any friends. I went through primary school without achieving too much and was never selected as prefect nor played rugby for the school's first team. During my primary school career, I have attended eight primary schools due to the nature of my father's work; I never had time to adapt to the different schools or to make any friends.

(Secondary School)

After primary school I attended the Technical High School in Klerksdorp, we stayed in Orkney not too far from Klerksdorp. My parents felt that I should attend a technical school which will prepare me to become an artisan one day. They felt that becoming an artisan is a much better profession than becoming a miner. All due respect to miners-my dad was a miner and he knew the challenges and nature of the work.

During my grade nine year, we relocated to Fochville where a new mine was about to be developed, but by this time I had enough of new schools and decided to stay behind and went back to boarding school.

Life became a little better in high school; at least I made some new friends and was part of the guys, playing all sports. After school, my roommate Henry Walker and I avoided the study sessions by participating in all sports, from cricket to tennis to rugby. I enjoyed the sport and noticed that I can compete with most of my mates.

During my school career, I always stayed out of trouble; done my homework, passed all my tests, doing just enough to stay below the radar. Over weekends I went home, and it wasn't that bad going back to school again.

A major change in my life came about when I was elected as school prefect and boarding school prefect in Grade 11, and on top of that I was selected for both first rugby and cricket teams!

Suddenly I was in leadership roles and however shy, something told me that I wasn't that worthless as I have thought. I must be honest; I wasn't a great student but managed to pass all my subjects and stayed out of trouble. I always believed in my heart that I wasn't good enough to go to university; the idea was just unthinkable!

I also understood that it was expensive and knew that my parents couldn't afford it to send me to university.

My matric year was the best year of my life, I enjoyed playing sports and I enjoyed the leadership roles I was selected for, I even started opening up, making friends and I was happy.

The end of year came quickly, and during the year end function, I was pleasantly surprised with two trophies being awarded to me. I was selected as the rugby player that has shown the most improvement in the school and received the trophy for sportsmanship. I was overwhelmed by the honour of these trophies and realized that I couldn't be so bad because I beat guys who I thought were much better than me! For the first time in my life, I experienced the feeling of recognition and victory, and I couldn't get enough of that. Suddenly my mates began to respect me for my ability as a sportsman and leader. This was something new to me; I was ecstatic and couldn't believe the new 'fame'!

I would realize later in my life that this was one of the turning points in my life, and that the Lord was in the process of starting training me towards reaching my calling!

High School first Rugby Team

Me



High School Student Council

Me



(Back to basics)

The year came to an end, and we wrote the final exams. It was a stressful time, but I managed to pass all my subjects - no distinctions but I passed! I was very glad finishing school, now life can begin!

With no set plan for my life and no manual to follow, my dad stepped in and said the mine where he was working- Anglo American, was recruiting for apprentices. That was not my first choice, but I applied for the position and was invited for the interviews, all went well, and I was selected as apprentice electrician.

A month after starting with my apprentice training, I was called up for National Military Service. (It was compulsory at the time to attend two year's national service)

I was called up to Pretoria - Swartkops Military Base.

On arrival at the base in Pretoria, I was told by my fellow troops that this base is the home of the so called "Reccie's", the Special Forces Reconnaissance Unit. I had no idea what it entailed and why I was elected to go there.

The troops were called together and briefed by the Commander that they will be tested and evaluated over a month to determine who will be good enough to join the Special Forces!

The evaluation started with medical tests and evaluations at 1 Military Hospital. I saw men coming from the battlefield with scars, without legs and arms - being rehabilitated, learning to walk again, it was disturbing, and I was confronted with reality that the two years in the army isn't going to be a holiday, it is serious you could die or get seriously injured.

A few days later the physical evaluation started –

We started off with a 14km walk/run with a canvas backpack filled with sand and stones. You had to complete the distance within two hours.

I completed the distance just in time and my legs and back was burning, full of blisters. The following day we had to run 5km's under 20 minutes, and again I just made it. The physical tests lasted for another few days and at the end we were exhausted!

The names were called out of those who succeeded and passed the evaluation.

Out of the 2000 troops called up and started the evaluation, only 400 men passed the gruesome tests, and I couldn't believe that I was one of them!

The next day was scheduled for interviews with the evaluation committee.

The troops were asked all kinds of strange questions about the country, politics, and the regime, and why they wanted to join the "Reccies".

When it was my turn to be interviewed, the captain asked me why I wanted to join the Special Forces. At the time it was required of the candidates to join the Défense Force for three years (permanent short term) if you wanted to become a "Reccie". I explained to the captain that I couldn't join because I have already signed a contract with Anglo American as an Apprentice Electrician. The captain was furious and chased me out of the room with the words; don't waste my !@#\$%^&* time troop!! That was the end of my Special Forces career!

The troops that didn't make it, were then posted out to various battalions all over South Africa; I ended up at 3 South African Infantry Battalion (3 SAI) in Potchefstroom. I was so happy, because Fochville, my hometown was only 50km's away from the camp! For the next three months we went through basic training, physical challenges, bad food, stomach illnesses, and standing in long queues.

The first open weekend arrived after two months; the families of the troops were allowed to visit the troops for the first time. I lost so much weight that my parents didn't recognize me. Mom was crying seeing my physical appearance and even dad had a tear in his eye!

I was super fit at that stage, and the physical challenges didn't bother me too much. Every afternoon we had to run the famous 2.4km to prepare us for what to come, the troops must be fit.

My fastest 2,4km recorded in the army was 7,35 minutes, and when converting this time, it gets to 3,06 minute/kilometre, which was not too bad for an average guy!

In the following months I came to terms with the reality of "gyppo guts" (upset tummy), the result for this condition is coming from a dirty "varkpan" (stainless steel food plate) being washed in dirty, greasy water. When contracting this humbling disease, you had no control over your bathroom etiquettes; it was almost every time too late...; I learned quickly to keep my eating equipment clean.

As a naïve, quiet young man walking a strait path - although without God, I couldn't believe all that was happening in the base. The troops fought with each other, with such a violent passion that I have never seen before, and sometimes over small things like walking over a clean floor or standing in a queue and someone jumping the line. They stole from each other and were smoking dagga, I couldn't bear it out anymore, I was not used to this type of behaviour and circumstances.

One day a recruitment team from Oudtshoorn Infantry School arrived at our base, they were recruiting troops to be trained as Junior Leaders for the next year. (Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers)

They told us how wonderful the training unit in Oudtshoorn was and played a promotional video showing the Infantry School's nice facilities; the troops, according to the promotional video, were eating off white plates, and they didn't even have to wash it afterwards.

It seems like the best camp in South Africa at that stage. Even more appealing was that the sea was only 60km away from the base.

I was willing to take a chance and applied for the course!

The applicants first had to complete aptitude tests and assessments, then waited a few hours for the results. From passing the tests we went on to the final interviews.

My name was called out and I was selected for the Junior Leader course. (JL's) I was happy but also a little scared for what was coming.

On the day of leaving for Oudtshoorn, my fellow troops, those that failed the selection, went home for their first "weekend pass" after three months in the army. I was feeling sad because this meant that I will only be able to visit home three months later (six months in total away from home).

We travelled by train to Oudtshoorn, and when arriving at Infantry School two days later it felt like a bomb has gone off, Corporals were blowing their whistles, chasing the dumbstruck troops, everyone was running to somewhere, it was chaos!

That first night we had to learn the Infantry School's song, clean our bungalows, and iron our clothes. The next morning at 4h00 the Corporals came in with a bang, blowing whistles, shouting, screaming, and swearing at everybody. The troops had to sing the Infantry School song, and if they failed to do so, they had to do push-ups and sit-ups. We quickly realized that this wasn't the same place advertised to us a week ago; this was going to be tough...!

During this time, I have learned about the terms "vasbyt" and "min dae", as well as that your mind controls your body, even if you are so tired that you can't go any further, you can still motivate yourself to carry on. One of the most challenging phases were "Vasbyt", where we were tested over a period of 5 days and 140km (rest day included). During this gruesome exercise, the troop's endurance, mental fitness, and leadership qualities were evaluated and tested to the limit. Vasbyt was one of the milestones in the course, if you don't pass it, you were kicked off the course.

In July during the winter season, we were flown to South West Africa (Namibia today) to start our border phase of training. This was something else, we were treated like real soldiers, and I realized that this was no game; this was war, the real thing! Three months went by swiftly and we headed back to the States. We were almost finished with our training program and was only left with the teaching phase, how to teach and do presentations in a classroom situation. December eventually arrived and we "passed out", receiving our ranks, a real joyful day!

After passing out and receiving my rank as corporal I was selected to stay behind at Oudtshoorn, forming part of the leadership team to train the next group of Junior Leaders. I was disappointed because it was now a year that I am based at Oudtshoorn and I only saw my family twice, my choice was to be transferred out closer to home.

At the time I didn't understand, but later I realized that I was selected to stay behind at Infantry School because I had certain qualities of leadership that was required to do the job, and eventually that God had a plan with me, and that He had already started His training with me to be able to work in the Kingdom of God.

In the beginning of my 2nd year service in the army (1985), I bought a yellow Golf 1500 with the help of my parents. Up to now, one had only two choices, you could either hike back home, or you could beg someone to ride with them. Hiking wasn't an option as valuable time was wasted waiting for a lift. Having my own car was a blessing and it made travelling between Oudtshoorn and home much easier.

Easter weekend was coming up and all the troops were excited to go home after four months in of intensive training. My family was so glad to see me, and we spend a wonderful weekend together, celebrated the whole weekend. When it was time to return to base, it was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye and started the long road (1100km) back to Oudtshoorn.

I drove all the way from Fochville to Colesberg and was getting tired, so we stopped, and I asked my friend to help me out, he was sleeping all the way and was fresh and well rested. I curled up on the passenger seat and quickly fell asleep. After about 70km's, 13km's away from Hanover, he fell asleep behind the wheel, the car left the road, turned over and rolled for almost 120 feet. Miraculously no one got hurt, we had just a few bruises and scrapes.

Yes, satan tried to take me out at that time but God's grace was enough to save me, because He had greater plans for me!

After my first year in the army, I decided that I will never treat the troops the way I was treated. Yes, I was serious about discipline and following orders, but I refused to mess the troops around. That was more the task of my fellow Instructor; Albert, he was my best and only mate in the army. Albert was a like a naughty little boy, he messed with the troops and made their life miserable!

He unfortunately was seriously injured when we went riding in the quarries with his Honda XR 500cc scrambler. Albert ramped over a hill and fell off with the bike on top of him and the bike's weight on his neck. I lifted him on the motorbike and rushed off to the hospital where Albert was transferred to Cape Town Military Hospital for treatment. When he eventually returned to base, completely healed, he was even crazier than before! Albert and I still have contact today and are good friends!

I have learned valuable lessons during my military service; I mean I was only 19 years of age when I was responsible for a platoon of 50 young men, to train them on how to make war and kill the enemy.

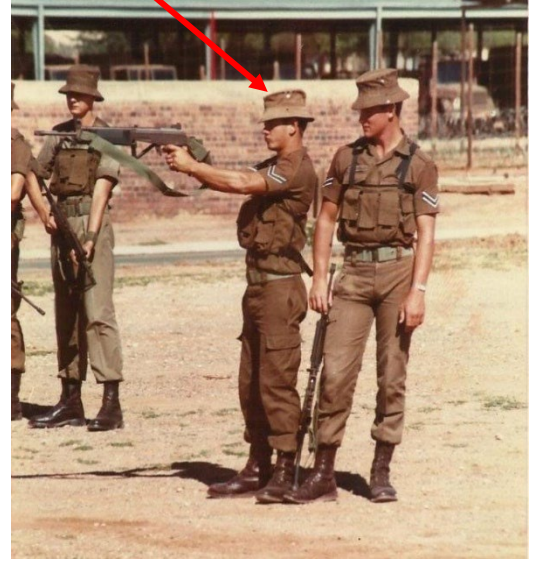
Me



Me



Albert



Me



(Life begins)

After completing my National Service, I started my career at Anglo American Mining Company near Carletonville as an Apprentice Electrician on the gold mines. Although this job wasn't my first choice, I immediately started earning a salary, and however not that much, it was my own. I was also fortunate enough to stay with my parents which saved me a lot of money, they also helped me with buying a car which made me the happiest young man in town.

During summer that year I was invited to join the local rugby club. Being still super fit coming out of the army, I was quickly selected for the first team. At the same time, I was also selected for the mines apprentice team.

I became aware that I had some potential as a rugby player and was really enjoying the game. By the end of the year at the prizegiving function, I was selected as player of the year by my club.

My rugby improved during the years, and I was selected for the Western Transvaal Golden Cup team. (I was the 1st player to be awarded my jacket, playing 12 games). I was also invited a few times to participate in the trials for the senior team but was never selected, although my coach and co-players thought that I should have been selected.

One day I was walking in town and a beautiful young lady was walking past me, I couldn't help turning around and she did the same and she smiled at me, I tripped and nearly fell on the sidewalk.

A month later I saw her again at a function, I used all my courage and asked her for a dance, and the rest is history....!

Four years later I qualified as electrician, and we got married.

We stayed together for a year before getting married, which was wrong, and we had to deal with it later in our lives.

Jan and Hannelie



Our beautiful little baby daughter Janke was born two years later. It was a hectic time in our lives because everything changed with a new-born in the house, and I was reluctant taking responsibility and wasn't always around to help my wife! Carel my son was born five years later, and we were so happy.

This newly found skill, playing rugby, scoring tries being the hero, meant many friends and lots of beers. The party after the rugby match was becoming more and more appealing as my life progressed. I couldn't get enough of the praises after the game; it made me feel good, worthy, and important.

Later in my life I would have realized that there was a hole in my heart longing for blessing and affirmation of who I was, my identity was based on worldly approval.

I worked for three years as an electrician at Western Deep Levels Gold Mine. There was no scope for me for any promotion as there were a couple of better skilled and experienced electricians lined up before me.

One day I received a call from my friend Manie, and he said there was a vacancy at a nearby mine for the position of Apprentice Supervisor. The position was at the same level as Forman level and would be a promotion.

He convinced me to apply for the position, I submitted my application and was invited for the interview.

The interview went well, and I was selected for the position, I was very excited and was looking forward to the new challenge.

Apart from my training experience in the army, I had no formal qualification in training and that bothered me, I knew I had to enhance my knowledge to get a proper qualification to do a proper job.

Sharing my concerns with my superiors, they motivated me to enrol for a part time course at the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) for my Human Resources Diploma.

Looking back, I noticed that God used people (thank you Manie, Oom Gys) to encourage me, trusting me, and believing in me. I was in the process of being trained for my calling.

After my rugby era ended, I started running to keep fit, and it was not long after when my fellow work colleagues nagging me to join them at the local marathon running club. I said no thank you, I had no intention to run a marathon, that was too far, and I couldn't even imagine that I can run that far. But they convinced me saying that I can run the distance I felt comfortable with.

They were all practicing for the Comrades Marathon, and I was very curious what it entails and what the requirements were to complete it.

I first heard of the Comrades when I was still in the army. There were a couple of guys that completed the race, and they shared their stories with us on how hard and difficult it was. According to them it was a great achievement and honour to complete this ultra-marathon. I was intrigued and a desire was borne in my heart to run this race.

So, I started running with the guys at the club, but couldn't keep up, for the first month I could only manage 3km per session, I was disheartened, but my fellow mates kept on

motivating me to keep on running, and the distances increased more and more as I became fitter. I first entered a 10km race, then the 21km race and was gradually getting more confidence in my ability to run longer distances.

Completing my first marathon was a big achievement, and that motivated me to start practicing for the Comrades Marathon.

Later that year I qualified for the Comrades and submitted my application.

What an adventure it is when 12 000 runners get together 5h00 in the morning in Durban to start this gruelling race. The excitement and expectations were thick in the air.

Chariots of Fire was playing loudly over the speakers, and I noticed a few tears among men and women. At 6h00 there was a huge bang, and the race begins!

All went well up to halfway (44,5km) and I was still feeling good, I was positive that I will finish the race within 11 hours. Then, at about 10km from the end I suddenly hit a "wall", my energy was gone, my legs were burning, and I could only walk.

I kept on walking, and reached the famous Polly Shorts, I had no strength to even try to run the steep uphill and I walked all the way to the top. When reaching the top, I realized that I wasn't going to make the race within 11 hours, not at this slow pace. Seven kilometres remained and I had only an hour to make it to the finish line.

Deep within me I knew; I will not accept failure and told myself to keep on going with everything in me, I started running as fast as I can, everything was burning, my lungs, my legs, I was pushing myself to my limits.

I eventually reached the finishing line and nearly collapsed - I was exhausted! I looked at the clock and saw that I made it in 10 hours and 36minutes! I still had 24minutes left!

I calculated afterwards that I ran the last 7km's at a speed of 5min/km, and that was a miracle for me!

What this race taught me is that your soul, (will, thoughts and emotions) is stronger than your body. Your body will always tell you that you can't, while your soul will tell you that you can. There is a constant battle between them. That what you put your mind to is definitely possible!



Back at work, my managers gave me the opportunity of relieving in various senior positions in other departments to develop me to the next level.

Although I felt exposed and inferior to do the work, I slowly started enjoying the challenges, and was excited of the prospect of possible promotion in the future.

But my career development path and dreams weren't going to last for long, there was a sudden drop in the gold price, and everything was put on hold, the reality was that the company had to cut costs to stay profitable.

It was an uncertain time in my life, the fear of losing my job was real. This threat motivated me to start a part time electrical business after hours. I was making good money and there were more opportunities coming up.

The pressure was heaping up and workers were retrenched or offered voluntary separation packages (VSP's).

After 15 years of service with the company, I was offered a separation package. I was sad leaving the company, my colleagues, and friends behind, but I was also excited to start this new phase in my life. Business went well for the next few years; I was excited about the future and had many plans in the pipeline.

Then I made the worst financial decision of my life, this decision almost resulted in us going bankrupt.

A friend of mine was doing a financial deal and needed a house where they can reside and do business from. I looked at their business plan and decided to help and stand in for them. I bought a suitable house on my name, and they were very thankful.

But the 'enemy' had other plans, and the whole venture went haywire, the business partner of my friend got away with their money, and we were all in one big financial crisis. I still had to pay two houses and it wasn't long before I couldn't afford it anymore. Everything went downhill from there and our marriage really took strain.

(Falling apart)

I always thought that our marriage was great, we didn't fight too much, we have lovely kids, I never swore in front of my family, nor did I mistreat them. But when I look back, then I realized that our marriage was just an arrangement, we rarely shared our hearts with each other; I didn't know what her desires was and vice versa. Our conversations were mostly topical.

I was having challenges keeping my business alive, and the same with my wife's business, we were both battling with our challenges and didn't spend much time talking about the issues.

Hannelie has a strong personality; she was running a successful business and made her own decisions without consulting me for any advice.

She made twice as much money as I did at the time, and her confidence and independence caused me to feel inferior and worthless, I felt that I wasn't needed at all.

I had this huge hole in my heart, the poor decision I made, my failing business, my inferiority caused me to do things I never considered before. I started drinking more and more, arranging parties, sometimes 2-3 times a week, trying to forget the problems we were facing.

Our financial situation went from bad to worse and as was our marriage. Being so unsecured and troubled, I was looking for acceptance everywhere. Someone gave me attention which made me feel good and wanted, and I started a secret friendship with a woman. After three months it came out and that was almost the end of my life and my marriage.

My wife was determined to divorce me, but I was adamant, I wouldn't settle for a divorce-never ever! I couldn't see my children growing up without a father, or someone else raising them. In any case, I loved my wife dearly, and wanted to make our marriage work, but I was sure that she didn't want me or loved me at all.

During this turmoil time, my wife was invited by her friend Judith to go on a woman's camp as a gift for her birthday.

This invitation was critical in our lives and triggered a sequence of events that saved our lives.

(A new beginning)

So, Judith and my wife went off to this woman's-camp near Pretoria. The weekend went slowly by for me, and I was wondering what they are doing at this camp?

The Sunday evening, Hannelie returned from the camp, and I was baffled, there was a difference in her, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was exactly; she seemed peaceful and was even glad to see me!

Later that night she told me about her experiences over the weekend and that she had accepted Jesus as her saviour and redeemer.

She continued by saying that she forgives me for everything I did, and she is not angry anymore. I couldn't believe my ears; I didn't know what to say to her ...?

I noticed that my wife had changed a lot, even her appearance changed, she was soft and even more beautiful than ever before. She looked happier and that was intriguing to me, I was longing for the same wholeness and peace...!

Apart from forgiving me for what I have done, she also went to the woman that I had this relationship with and forgave her for what she has done. This gesture was the final proof to me, I had a brand-new wife!

Our relationship improved a lot, but I was still battling with guilt; I just couldn't forgive myself for what I have done to my wife and family, breaking their trust in me. Six months went by and on one day my wife said there is a "mannekamp" (camp for men) coming up, and asked me if I would like to go?

I agreed and was told that my three friends will also join me. I wasn't sure about all the details of the weekend, but a breakaway from the current circumstances would be great!

On the Friday of our departure, we were packing our stuff getting ready to go and yes, the cool box filled with beers also found their way into our luggage!

On our arrival at the camp, we booked in and completed the registration. (“Woord en Aksie”, was the camp’s name)

My friends and I was taken to our room where we got settled in. I was looking around and the setup was looking strange for me! We were asked to go back to reception as the opening is at 19h00. Still confused, we entered the auditorium, gospel music was playing, and I suddenly realized, this is a “church – camp”!

The first session started, and I noticed men singing, dancing, and clapping their hands, they seemed to be on another planet, I was really tempted to run away, I couldn’t wait for the session to pass by. We realized that this was not a typical relaxing weekend with the men! My friends and I was coming from traditional churches where there is order and discipline in the church, and we were not accustomed to this commotion, we were traumatized!!

Later that night in our room, uneasy and out of our comfort zones, the beers were taken out to calm down our nerves and we reviewed what happened earlier; this is a weird place, and weird people. One of the friends tried to convince us to leave back home immediately, but we agreed to attend the next morning session and see what’s happening.

Saturday morning went very slowly without any major incidents.

After the morning session, we were off for the afternoon, very happy and glad the session is over we got into the car and drove off to the nearest pub to watch rugby and had a few beers. After the match we went back to the camp and experienced an evening even longer than the previous night.

I had my hands full as my friends wanted to leave for home!

Sunday morning arrived and we were all glad, it was almost time to go home.

First speaker up was Neville Norden, he shared his testimony, and which really touched my heart. At the end of the session, he called out men with back pains, damaged knees, and those with any illness, and he prayed for them for healing. We were sitting in the front row, and I witnessed with my own eyes how the person’s shorter leg grew during prayer to the same length as the other leg! I was shocked and amazed at the same time.

I realised then that God was real, and He meant business with us.

The next speaker was a guy by the name of Francois Venter, and he told us all about his upbringing in Israel. He went to Israel’s army-special forces, I could immediately relate to him and his story; he was a tough man and I thought to myself; he is/was such a tough man, but he is also a Christian?

At the end of his session, he asked the following question – if you drive home this afternoon and you are in a car accident and die, where will you go – to heaven or to hell? I knew in my heart that I was heading to hell!

His testimony touched my heart, so when Francois made the altar call, all four of us went to the front and accepted Jesus in our hearts. There was no falling or speaking in tongues, but there was an awareness that something changed inside of me, I knew I was saved and that I will have eternal life.

On my arrival at home the Sunday evening, my wife was anxiously waiting for me, she asked me about the weekend and everything that happened. I shared my experiences with her

and told her that I gave my heart to the Lord; we cried together for a while and Hannelie was so happy for me.

Then Monday morning arrived, and everything was back to normal, nothing changed overnight, my challenges were still there. I still had to fight to stay alive and face even more storms, it was a continuous battle. I made the same mistakes and had the same feelings, but over and above that, I had peace inside me which was indescribable.

It was during this time that a lady friend of my wife-Ina, moved back to our town. Hannelie and Ina was long-time friends and used to do business with each other. Ina invited my wife to a cell group where they studied the Bible. Hannelie asked my permission to attend, which was strange, she normally just did what she wanted to. So, in the past I would have refused because I was so unsure about myself, and on top of that jealous, always afraid that she will enjoy life more than me, but this time I agreed, I had no objections.

After a while I noticed that Hannelie was becoming kind of weird, she and her new friends have started a worship dance group; she was wearing different clothes, not denims anymore, only nice bright dresses. She was playing gospel music in the house and in the car and which made me a bit uncomfortable. So, I started asking questions about their bible study meetings, intrigued, wanting to know what is going on. I took up all my courage and asked if they don't have meetings in the evening because I also wanted to attend?

Ina agreed to my request and the meetings started; we were only two families at first.

She started off with teachings on the feasts of the Lord, I battled, understood nothing of what was taught, and my initial thoughts were confirmed, this group was weird! But I decided to go again and was gradually learning little by little the secrets of the Bible.

I started understanding Ina's teachings and a new world opened before me.

We met more Christian friends in the bible study group, wonderful people, and their knowledge on the bible was impressive!

They could hear the Lord's voice and testified what the Lord shared with them. It was obvious that they had another kind of relationship with the Lord, maybe they prayed more or read the bible more than me, because I have never experienced the Lord saying anything to me.

The same old feelings came back to me - I felt worthless again, feeling that I am not good enough, there must be something wrong with me!

One Friday afternoon, two and a half years after giving my heart to Jesus, my friend Paul called and asked me if I want to go with him on a camp arranged by his church. I initially said no, I had no money for luxuries, but Paul convinced me that all the costs were covered, I must just go along.

The camp was held at a nice venue near Magaliesburg.

Over the weekend the speaker-Albert, talked about forgiveness and that we should forgive and set people free that have hurt us.

During one of the small group meetings the group leader shared his testimony with the group, it was almost a copy and paste of my life experience. He was emphasizing that his breakthrough came when he forgave the person that caused him and his business to go bankrupt. I just broke down and told the group what happened to me - my poor financial decisions which ruined me. The group leader challenged me to go back the Monday to call the person and to forgive him for his part in the deal, and so set him and myself free.

So, I got the message bright and clear, I must call the person and forgive him! It seemed unthinkable, why should I forgive him, I didn't do anything wrong! But I decided that I will call him on Monday and just do it!

So, the Monday morning I called him and there was no answer, I called again at about 12h00-no answer, so I thought that I will make one last call. At about 16h00 I made the last call, his wife answered and I asked to speak with him, she was however reluctant to give him the phone and asked me why I want to speak to him, I told her and she broke down into tears and gave him the phone - so I said to him "I forgive you and I set you free, the past is behind us", after a while he just replied "dankie", and I put the phone down. So that was it, from that moment one huge mountain came off my shoulders and I really felt free, I experienced peace and joy, it was indescribable!

That was about the hardest thing that I have ever had to do!

I noticed later that after setting this man free, it was the beginning of me hearing the Lord's voice!

(Decision time)

As explained earlier, helping my friend to buy a house for his family was a poor decision on my side, I never did a risk assessment or asked the question – what can go wrong?

My arrangement with my friend paying the house went well so we were all happy.

Then one day arrived that would change our life's forever!

My friend was crooked out of a business deal, and when the news came through, he moved out of the house and relocated to another province, leaving me with a huge predicament!

I thought well, this is bad news, but we will cope, I will just advertise, get new tenants and sell the house later.

But nothing worked out that way and I was stuck with paying two houses.

Our businesses did well at the time, we were not rich, but we had no lack either, we were living a comfortable life and I had plans to expand my company and the future looked great. Although my company did well, I was depended on one main client, so when I lost that contract, my business came to a screeching halt.

My wife's business was also taking strain, and we couldn't understand what was happening. but both our businesses were battling to break-even.

We tried everything to get out of the mess and realized that we will have to make hard decisions because bankruptcy was staring us in the eyes!

My wife's sister, heard about our situation and she gave us a video from Craig Hill from Family Foundations International, called The GOOD Plan. (Get Out Of Debt)

We studied this video and realized that we had no proper budget, and we had no financial plan for the future, and that was part of the reason why we were in such a financial mess.

For us to get out of this mess will take courage and discipline, we will have to make many changes in our daily life and that is not going to be easy!

At the time (2004), I owed my creditors +- R2 000 000-00!

We had a beautiful house, and this was our safe haven where we spend a lot of time to make it pretty and raising our children.

The house and cars were almost paid off and some of the hard decisions we had to make, was to sell our assets so that we could get cash and pay the creditors.

The house sold quickly, and we made a good profit. It was very emotional to let it go, our children were raised in this house, there were many good times, and it was really difficult for us to let go!

My brother Kallie loaned us a car and agreed to sell it to me, he was so kind and said that I can pay him back on a monthly base. My friend Paul also lended us a car for my wife, so we were mobile for the time being. During this very bad time I learned who my real friends were.

I made an appointment with my lawyer-friend to ask him for advice regarding my financial situation.

He suggested that we should sequestrate, as it was best practice for anyone in the same situation! I listened to him and agreed that it was the best plan to follow. I asked him some questions about how the process of liquidation will work, and he explained to me.

What bothered me in the process was that you will have to swear before God that you don't have any money to pay your debt! Well, that was a big problem for me; I had money and although not enough I will be lying to God if I made that oath, I cannot do that! I respectfully declined the advice and went back home to my wife, saying sequestration was not an option. We prayed about what next to do and was waiting on the Lord for His advice?

With the monies received from selling the house and cars, we had about R500 000 to pay our creditors whom we owed R2 000 000!

Then the Lord gave me a plan to approach my creditors and offered them 50% cash of what we owed them, I also said to them that if they don't accept the offer that I will pay them back a minimal monthly fee which will take forever. Amazingly, almost all of them accepted my offer!

Only one of the banks refused to accept the offer and we still had to pay them off. There was light in the dark tunnel.

Refusing to sequestrate and lying before God was a cardinal decision I made. I was convinced that God rewarded me for that and from that time He blessed me over and over again.

The journey to restoration had begun!

(The journey)

Without a constant income, I began searching for work, sending out my CV, contacting all the people I know but to no avail, there were no opportunities. I had to generate income as quickly as I can as we were in need. As a qualified electrician, I started with general maintenance and installations in town, but after being my own boss for five years, I was struck with the reality on how difficult is to start over from scratch. The work I did was just enough to cover the basics, it wasn't sustainable.

One of the few friends remaining, called me one day offering me a temporary position at a nearby mine. For six months this income helped us a lot, and we never went to sleep without food or a roof over our heads.

The process of restoration was on its way, God used people to help us, it was never going to be an easy, quick fix, I had to learn patience, consistency, and His principles.

One day I was contacted by another friend who had his own construction company: doing maintenance and construction at the same group of mines. He made me an offer as a site manager, mainly to manage projects at the client's gold plants. The salary he offered me was almost twice as what I was earning at the mine.

This offer was a blessing from God, part of the package was a company 'bakkie' which made our life so much easier. I was so thankful to the owner!

For three years I worked for this company and learned many things about contracting, working with the client, working with people from all types, positions, and cultures.

The company did well, I was earning a good salary and was happy at that stage. I also felt that I was making a difference and that my work performance was paying off as the company was growing bigger.

But something was busy changing within me, in the past I used to shout and scream at the workers when they were not performing, I was agitated, angry and aggressive, not a nice person to work with at all.

The custom on paydays was to arrange a "braai" where everyone got together, all were happy, drinking together as if nothing bad has ever happened before.

Although I was saved, I still used to drink a couple of beers occasionally with friends and colleagues.

One Saturday morning after attending my friend's birthday party, I woke up and the Lord spoke to me, I immediately knew that I will never drink again. He set me free; instantly! It was a miracle! (23 September 2007)

Giving up alcohol caused quite an uneasiness with my colleagues at work, they couldn't quite understand why I stopped drinking because we always used to go to pubs drinking, discussing work, and our relationship was good. Feeling totally out of my place at work, the idea grew on me to resign, I felt that I didn't fit in the company anymore. I spoke to my wife, and we started praying on the matter.

Hannelie and I got to an agreement with the Lord that it was the right thing to do to resign. (Even without a new work...!)

The next day I went to my boss and gave him my resignation letter. He was so surprised, wanting to know why I resigned, and asked what he could change to make me stay. When I told him I had no other job opportunity yet, he offered to help me looking for another job, he is a good man! This was unlike me; resigning without having a new opportunity, but there was real peace within me, I knew that it was the right thing for me to do. I received calls from two other companies, (competitors) offering me work. But I knew that it wasn't for me, I would not fit in. I explained to this good man that my life had changed when I accepted Jesus, and that He wanted to use me elsewhere. He seemed confused, but said he understood and accepted my resignation.

One evening our cell group leader was talking about baptizing of the believer (adult baptizing), something that I didn't understand at the time, I thought the people that were doing that was part of a sect and I was not convinced that it was the right thing to do for me. My wife and children were eager to be baptized...! When we got home that night, my wife asked me what I think about the baptism teaching? I said that I understand it now, I was baptized as a child and that was enough for me. She couldn't believe her ears; I was totally deceived, my religious upbringing totally blinded me! This subject of baptizing kept on bothering me, and after some time studying the word and following Jesus's journey in the New Testament, I learned that He was baptized. Jesus was and is the example that we must follow! So, I was eventually convinced that baptizing was the right thing to do, and my family and I got baptized on 10 December 2010.

After been baptized, I noticed that my relationship with Jesus Christ became more intimate than ever before!

(The Job)

After a month of doing private jobs, I received a call from a friend working at an international mining contractor company (MRC-Murray and Roberts Cementation), saying the company has a vacancy for an Engineering Training Officer (temporary position) and asked if I was interested?

This was the call that started our financial restoration.

Klaas was walking past a group of men at work, and he heard them discussing the need for an Engineering Training Officer, he stopped and said to them that he knows someone! Klaas called me and arranged the interview. The interview lasted for about 15 minutes, and I had the job.

All glory to God, and thanks to Klaas being observant and obedient!

MRC is a huge company and working in such a big company was strange and intimidating, I had to find my feet quickly and get to speed with the requirements. I worked for three months in the temporary position when I was appointed to Skills Development Facilitator. I was so thankful because the new position meant a bigger salary and more benefits, I was tankful and gave all glory to our God Almighty.

When I was still searching for work, I had sent out my CV to various companies, and three months down into my new work I received a call from Sasol-Explosives, they offered me a job with a wonderful salary. I went to my boss and showed him the offer and said that I cannot refuse this job offer. He agreed and wished me all the best. But about a week later I received a counteroffer from MRC which was even higher than the Sasol offer; I was offered the position for Engineering Training Manager! Wow! The blessing of the Lord was chasing me. But the Lord wasn't finished with me yet, six months later I was promoted to Senior Training Manager Engineering, and I was overwhelmed!

I must mention a man – the late Neil Lane, he mentored me since I was employed, he was such a gentleman, he treated me with respect, he guided me and taught me many things, especially on how to treat people. He saw something in me that I didn't even know I had. This journey at Murray and Roberts Cementation continued for six years, up to 2012 when the country and world experienced the economic challenges. These challenges affected MRC as well, and the company lost many contracts, the workforce was reduced from 12000 to 4000 employees. I was retrenched in the process and suddenly without work again.

(Becoming debt free)

In 2004, when I accepted the Lord in my life, I have realized how poorly I managed my income all the years, so in 2005 we started working on a financial plan to become debt free, something that we never had before. Our financial plan projected that we would become debt free by December 2013.

This was a difficult journey, we decided to cut all luxuries, and for four years we didn't go on leave, we didn't eat out, and we didn't have DSTV.

During this time, my daughter completed matric, and she enrolled for university. I refused to take out a student loan and paid cash for all the expenses. It was a difficult period, she had no transport and had to walk wherever she wanted to go. I didn't have the money to buy her a car, but Janke never complained.

Thomas my friend heard about that, and the good man he is, he donated a scooter to Janke, she was so happy and thankful!

Janke and Thomas



I noticed God's work in our lives, he used His children in different ways to help us on our journey. These friends were amazing, and I am so thankful for them!

We experienced so much favour from the Lord, a dear friend of us Uncle Basjan, offered that we could stay on his farm for free, we just had to pay for the electricity and maintained the house and yard. This generous offer made many things possible, and we honoured him for his role in our lives.

In May 2010 we moved to Uncle Basjan's farm; the farm was located halfway between Fochville and Potchefstroom, and we settled in nicely. I was happy to stay on the farm, but for my wife and kids it was a challenge, Hannelie had her business to run in town, the kids had to go to school, so they had to get up early in the mornings and only came home late in the evenings.

A wonderful man, Arno Claassen came into our lives when we attended his seminar – Moneywise. From him we learned that we had the power within to do anything we set our minds on. His favourite saying was – “You are the captain of your own ship”! I learned that I was responsible for my life, no one else, and that I had to take control and make decisions to prosper in life!

With the knowledge we learned from him and FFI (Family Foundations International), we slowly started to progress towards our set goals.

In December 2012, one year earlier than planned, we became debt free!

The Lord blessed us all the way, and what I learned was that once you decided on a plan together with God and you keep to the plan, the Lord will help and bless you. The outcome is almost always better than planned!

(Sowing and Reaping)

The Lord was patiently teaching me His financial principles, of which one was – Sowing and Reaping.

Although I thought I understood the concept, I had no practical experience in doing it myself. One day I was driving towards Rustenburg, thinking about nothing, listening to worship music, then suddenly an idea popped up in my head. I felt the Lord said to me that I must sow R300 towards our cell-group leader.

My immediate response was – no I can't Lord, this is the last week of the month, and my budget is so tight, I will never make it to the end of the month! I heard nothing further from Him. That evening I told my wife about the experience with God telling me to sow the R300, she agreed with me that our budget will not allow for it. But we prayed over the matter and later felt convinced to sow the money.

So, the next day I was on the road again, deep in my thoughts, listening to music when I heard a message coming through on my cell phone, it was a payment notification from ABSA Bank, SARS (Tax Revenue Service) had paid R30 000 into my bank account. I was stunned, I had no idea that they owed me anything, I had to stop next to the road to take all in! Still processing this, I heard the Lord saying, Jan that was Me, this is how the kingdom principles are working – you reap what you sow! I was so thankful and praised the Lord over and over.

This was my first experience in sowing and reaping.

One day we bought a sheep and when packing the meat into the fridge I said to my wife, let's give the one leg of lamb to our pastor, it just came to mind and thought they would appreciate it. We gave them the meat and they were very happy and thankful and blessed us for the kind gesture.

A month later our farmer friends visited us, and they brought along a whole sheep, a gift to us. Again, I hear the Lord saying, Jan that was Me, you sown a leg of lamb, and got back a sheep! I was just amazed and thanked the Lord.

These two incidents removed any doubt from my mind that the Lord is true to His word, what you sow you will reap!

2Cor 9:6 [Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings.

I have many examples of how the Lord blessed me in finances.

As I was learning His financial system, I started sowing where the Lord shows me, and He always amazes me with the results. Where I started off with sowing R300, it increased to an amount of R30 000. The returns on the seed sown went up to R600 000 in one year!

Favour was coming to us, for example I received shares from my company, never expecting it.

I must warn all reading this, my intention was never to sow so that I can get money back. I only sow when the Lord spoke to me and where He shown me to sow. It is all about the status of your heart, being faithful and being obedient.

(Father and sons Conference)

In May 2011, in the afternoon I was standing outside the house, it was a beautiful day and was overlooking the farm enjoying the splendour of God's works.

While looking towards the north and seeing the spring flowing towards Klipdrift dam, I suddenly saw a vision of the Mighty Men Conference held in 2010; the huge stage and the thousands of men worshipping and praising the Lord. The vision just came up in my spirit and mind, I wasn't thinking about anything specifically. I went into the house and shared the vision with my wife Hannelie, and she calmly said, ok go for it! I looked at her and asked, what do you mean? She was just smiling and suddenly I realized that she meant I must arrange a MMC (Mighty Men Conference) event!

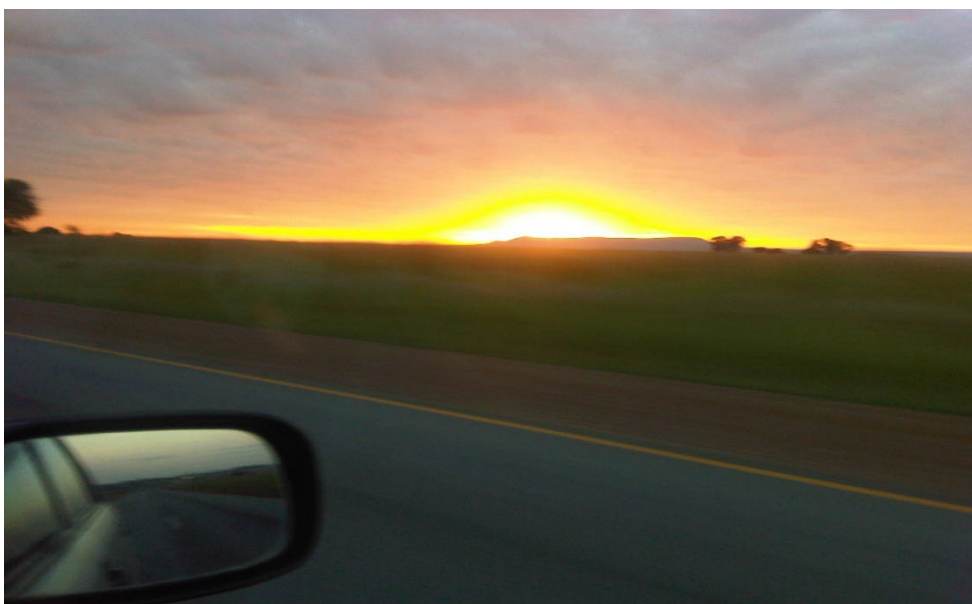
But I had to be certain and wanted confirmation from the Lord Himself.

I left the discussion there and some time passed...

During July 2011, after visiting Malawi (A Family Foundations International outreach), my brother-in-law (Leon Hartwig) was visiting, and I shared the vision with him. (He is also one of my mentors) Well Leon just said that I must be sure that the instruction is from our Lord as this was really a massive event to organize, and that the whole community must be involved (Churches, schools, farmers, and businesses)! Leon knew what he was talking about, as he is in the same church as Uncle Angus Buchan and was involved in helping with several of these conferences.

A month later I drove to work early morning (5h30), the sun was just rising over Losberg mountain. (A standalone mountain close to our town – Fochville) This was such a beautiful picture that only God Himself could have painted it. I was praising the Lord for His greatness and the beautiful nature!

The next thing I heard the Lord saying to me; Jan when are you going to start? I immediately knew that the Lord was referring to the MMC event!



The next morning, I received a prophetic word from my brother Kallie: he was watching Uncle Angus's program Grassroots on television one Sunday morning, and he saw in the spirit that I was speaking to a huge audience!

That was enough confirmation for me, and I knew that I must be obedient and start doing what the Lord was asking.

I contacted Uncle Angus (1 October 2011) and asked him if he was willing and have the time to be one of the speakers at the conference. I thought by myself that his response will be the final confirmation for me. Two weeks later I received an email from him, and it goes like this; "although it is still a long time ahead and he cannot commit to the date (26-28 April 2013), yet he will pray and think about coming to the event".

Uncle Angus had one requirement; and that was that he wants to fly in and out on the same day, he didn't sleep over anymore! I knew that the costs for private charters were expensive, and I contacted my friend Burger, he is a pilot for South African Airways, and asked him about where we can get a private charter and what the cost would be. I send Burger the message and explained the vision to him, as well as the requirements from Uncle Angus; within 30 minutes he responded from New York and said the airplane was organized and paid for! Wow, then I knew this can only be from the Lord!

The Lord also gave me the theme and the date for the event: "Father and sons" (26-28 April 2013).



This assignment from the Lord exited me, and although I was unemployed and had little income, I knew I had to do it. I had no idea how this will even be possible to arrange.

I made a list of people I knew that might possibly be interested in assisting with organizing the event. I invited all of them to our first meeting. (We were +-20 in total) I explained the vision and the details of what I felt the Lord has instructed me to do, and they all responded that they wanted to be part of it. Each one of them raised their hands and volunteered for the different tasks.

We had two years to prepare for the event and had to start working on the arrangements as soon as possible.

After a year the group became smaller, and we ended up with a few men dedicated to make the event a success. (Pieter, Kallie, Burger, Danie, Theo, Chris, Dré, Barry, Armand, Johan, Jacques, Bismarck, Thomas, GP, Jannie, Oom Hennie)

I stayed in connection with Uncle Angus and the Shalom team, communicating regularly with them. One day we received an invitation from Uncle Angus to visit Shalom in Kwazulu Natal for a MMC meeting. The team was highly excited and Danie offered his aeroplane for the trip and Burger flown the team down to Natal, what an experience that was! The purpose of the meeting was to share the rules, regulations, and format on how to present a Mighty Men Conference. We also had the honour to meet Uncle Angus in person and to shake his hand!

After the visit back home, I wasn't feeling comfortable with using MMC name and abiding under their rules and regulations. (With all due respect).

I prayed and one day I heard the Lord clearly speak to me saying that I should follow the vision He gave me – his vision for me was to arrange a Father and sons conference, not a Mighty Men Conference. This time I listened and went back to the team and told them what I received from the Lord. There was disappointment under the guys as we all wanted Uncle Angus at the conference. But the team stuck together, and the arrangements started. Preparing for at least 100 000 men, the team started working, cutting the grass on the farm, did the electrical installations, building the showers, arranging the toilets, repairing the entrance roads, marketing and advertising the event, arranging the sound, and many more. All the arrangements just seemed to fall in place, we had so much favour from people and companies, and I want to mention a few –

Chris building the showers, arranging the water tanks, cutting the grass and many more.

GP did the printing and designing of the advertising boards.

Danie lends his aircraft to us and covered the stage and sound costs.

Theo installed the big advertising boards supplied by GP, cutting grass and many more.

Dré, Armand, Chris and Barry provided the diesel and tractors for cutting the grass.

Pieter: I didn't know him at the time, but one day he just arrived at my doorstep, and said the Lord has send him to hold up my hands (same as Aaron helped Moses).

Pieter didn't know that an hour before his arrival, that I was praying and crying out to the Lord, asking Him for help, as I felt that everything was too big and overwhelming, and that I was busy drowning...!

Pieter was praying for me, taking off pressure and was by my side all the time.

Another aspect that we established from the start and most importantly, the Lord put together an awesome intercessor group. (Oom Hennie, Tannie Olive, Hannelie, Burger, Caroline, Tannie Marie, Pieter, Anel)

They were covering us and was praying for the event, and today I know that without them the event would have been impossible.

It was amazing how the men came together and helped, using their own resources to make the event possible.

After long deliberations and prayer, we felt that following men/speakers should be invited to take part in the event, sharing their experiences. Danie Botha, Arno Claassen, Jacques Gombault, and Jannie de Beer.

Then the day arrived that we were anticipated for two years!



Men and boys arrived setting up their camps, and the air was filled with excitement and expectancy.



When all the men arrived, it was no way near 100 000 men..., I must be honest I was a bit disappointed, the Lord whispered in my ear; he only needed Gideon and 300 willing men to destroy the enemy!

(Jdg 7:7) And the Lord said to Gideon, With the 300 men who lapped I will deliver you, and give the Midianites into your hand. Let all the others return every man to his home.

I never counted the crowd; but looking at them, I estimated that there were about 300 men; the Lord is so faithful!
Men and boys gave their hearts to Jesus and miracles happened. The feedback received later from the attendees was amazing.



(Back to work)

Back to normal life, I was still without a job, but I kept on doing what I can with what I had. One day a friend called me; Izak asked me if I was still in the market looking for work, I said yes definitely, and a week later I was invited for a position at an international company in town. The interview went well, and I received a very good offer.

That afternoon I arranged a meeting with my family and laid the offer on the table for discussion.

All agreed that I must take the offer, except for my son, I asked Carel why he was not happy, and he just said he is not at peace. The work entailed that I had to travel weekly to the Northern Cape, and that I will be home only once a month.

I knew that if there was no unity between us, that I couldn't accept the work.

The next morning spending time with the Lord, he gave me this scripture:

(Pro 16:25) There is a way that seems right to a man and appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

How clear can the message be; that was confirmation that I cannot take up the offer. I notified Izak and explained that I cannot take the work.

Two weeks later he reached out again to me and invited me to another interview.

This time I was offered an even better position. I went back to my family, and all agreed that I must take the offer.

So, for the past almost nine years I am working up in Africa and are blessed to work for an amazing company and CEO.

By the end of 2019 my daughter and her friend Herman approached me asking if I will marry them?

That was a pleasant surprize and I didn't hesitate for a moment, what an honour that will be! I thought about it and decided that if I am going to marry them, then I want to do it properly, I am going to start studying for pastor and get my certificate as marriage officer. 2020 was an intense year; covid arrived, I started studying for both the marriage officer's exam, and the pastor's course. By the end of 2020 I completed the pastor's course as well as passing the marriage officer's test.

I also began writing the book as was instructed by the Lord in 2009.

2021 was a very special year, the year of marriages!

Carel my son, the youngest of my two children, jumped the queue and got married before his sister Janke, so I had the privilege of marrying both my son and my daughter in one year. Marrying my children was two of the highlights of my life!

The Schoonraad Clan:

Marcoreth (new daughter), Hannelie, Herman (new son), Janke, Jan, Carel



Both my children graduated from university; and I was so proud of them. It wasn't easy for them during their studies because I was still in my financial recovery process, they had to come by with the bare minimum, and they never complained about anything.

My children changed history; because they were the first descendants from the Schoonraad family that went to university for post school studies. They changed the course of life for their descendants – never, ever will their children or grandchildren feel too stupid, (like I did) or think it is impossible to study at a university, or to become anything they dreamed about!

The Blessing of the Lord is on them, the decision they made to follow Jesus will empower them to always prosper and rule on this earth.

Janke



Carel



The Book – Toolbox for Men

Getting back to the book, I wasn't sure on how, or where to start writing the book, I just knew that I must start with it. One morning during my quiet time with the Lord, He spoke to me and said, Jan you already have the book!

Through the years after my salvation, I kept a journal on all my experiences as well as subjects that I have explored and studied, and which was intriguing to me, so the Lord said that if I put everything together then I have the book! I only had to compile the study notes together into a sensible book form.

By the end of the year on 31 December 2020, the Book – “Toolbox for Men” was completed and on 20 February 2021 the book was published.



I contacted all the major book companies in South Africa, seeing if they wanted to distribute my book, but none of them was interested.

So, I asked the Lord that if no one is interested in the book, what does He want me to do with it, what does He want to achieve with the book?

Praying about the matter, I experience in my spirit that He wanted me to use the principles in the book to equip and help men; the principles He taught me on!

In 2021 during a strategic meeting at Family Foundations International's Head Office in Kwazulu Natal, He revealed the gameplan to me on how to use and distribute the book. I should find 'multipliers' in Africa that will use the book and its content. They will roll it out in their countries, and by using this principle, Africa-men can be reached quickly in various countries.

From that day key people raised their hands, and today I can see what is happening and what is still going to happen. I am excited with what the Lord is doing in Africa.

Holy Spirit also motivated and inspired me to arrange Toolbox Men-Camps in South Africa, and to date we have already completed two of these camps and the feedback received is awesome.



The Lord blessed me with awesome friends, they are warriors in the Kingdom, they have their own ministries and have awesome testimonies. They found time somewhere in their busy lives to assist me as facilitators for the Toolbox Camps. I am so thankful and proud of you!

Pieter



Bismarck



Dylan



Bismarck

Piet

Charl



Summary

I made the mistakes I did in my life, because - **I didn't know what I didn't know!**

Like most young men, I haven't received a manual for life – on how to be a husband, how to be a dad, how to manage my finances, and everything else a man is responsible for.

I cannot blame anyone for not teaching me these principles, because there were enough opportunities to give my life to Jesus and to learn about the things I didn't know.

I always knew deep within my soul that I was on the wrong path, but I chose to ignore it.

Some of the mistakes I made were -

- a. I didn't know Jesus, and I wasn't saved. (I had many opportunities to accept Him in my life which I didn't do!)
- b. Identity -
I had no idea who I was: I was seeking worldly recognition in sport, status, attention, and money, instead of asking Jesus who He says I am!
- c. Calling/Purpose -
I had no idea what my purpose was for my life was and what I was called for; again, I didn't search for my purpose at the right place, namely Jesus!
- d. I had no idea what it entails to be the head of my house!
 - I was supposed to provide for my family,
 - I was supposed to ensure that my family knows Jesus by setting the right example in the house,
 - I was supposed to be a father for my children, teaching them about Jesus, life and to impart destiny and purpose.
- e. I had no budget and had no financial plan for my life.
- f. I never understood the difference between Covenant and Contract – that a Marriage is not a Contract but a Covenant.

I hope this testimony will encourage you so that you will know that there are always Hope!!

Hope in Jesus - It doesn't matter what happened to you, if you have a relationship with

Jesus, He is waiting for your call right now! He cannot wait to help and restore you!

You just need to give all over to Him and trust Him!

I am so excited and grateful to the Lord and can't wait to see what he wants to do more!

...And the journey continues...