

Paul's Story

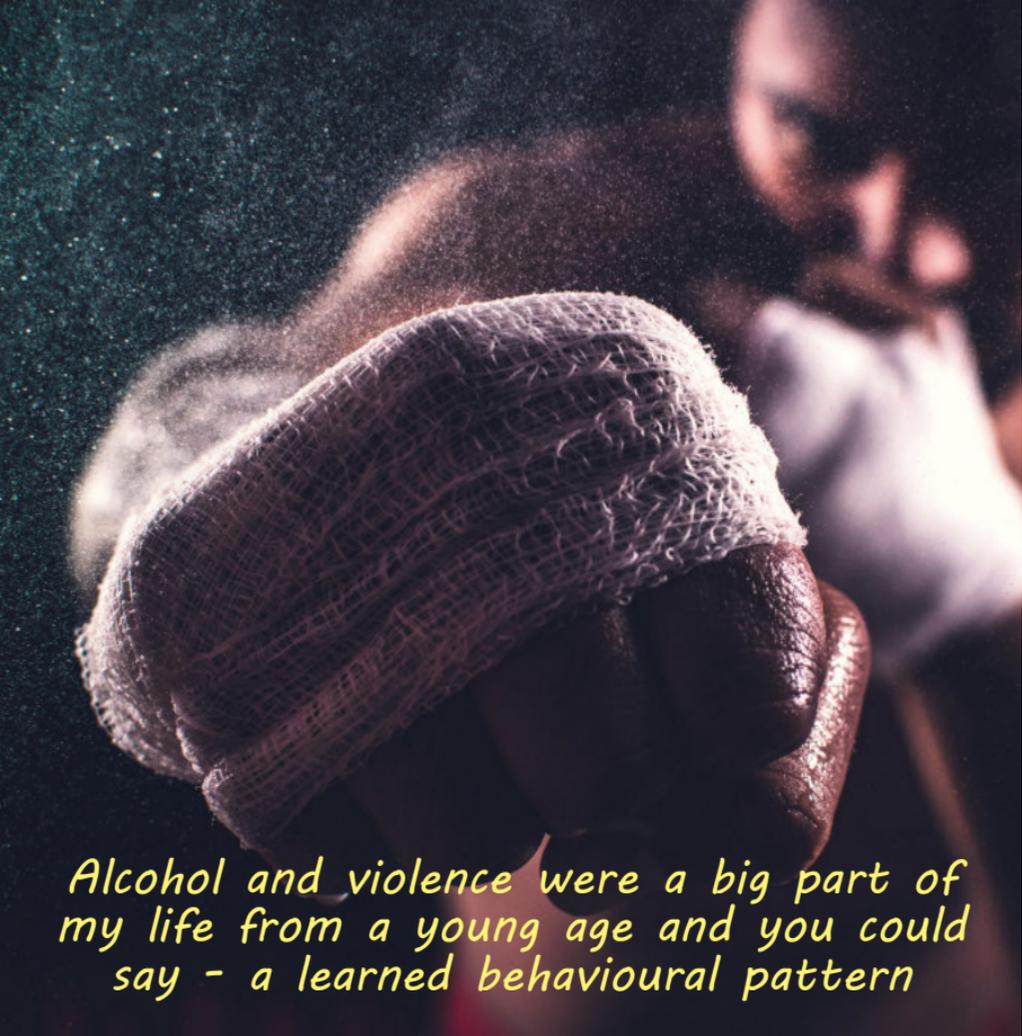




One of 3 children I was born into what today would be described as a dysfunctional family with a father who was alcoholic and arguing and fighting between mum and dad was a regular occurrence. Mum had to work evenings to bring home money to feed us as whatever dad had he spent on feeding his addiction and stole from mum his own mother and others to afford drink. He did work but would lose jobs because of his unreliability. It was from the age of 3 or 4 that the abuse of myself began to take place. I was the one who bore the brunt of dad's temper while mum was out working evenings to bring in some income so that she could feed us. Whatever happened and it didn't matter if I had done anything wrong or not, I would be the one who took the beating. One incident which will stick in my memory forever is a day when mum had left food for us and had even managed to make a jelly with ice-cream for afters. When it

came to have the jelly and ice-cream and I asked dad where it was, he took me into the kitchen and showed me that it was in the oven which he had turned on to full heat. He then forced me to take the dish out of the oven with bare hands telling me that if I dropped the dish or spilt any of it then he would beat me from pillar to post. As the dish was burning my hands and causing great pain, I did drop the dish on the hearth in the front room and it smashed. Dad was true to his word, it ended with a visit to the hospital because of a gash over my eye needing stitching after being thrown into the corner of the mantle piece.

The violence continued leading to my dad being sexually inappropriate to me, this continued for the next 2 years and was something never spoken of to mum or anyone because the usual blackmail was used in saying that it was because he loved me and no one had to know or I would be



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taken away and placed in a home and both he and mum would go to prison. This was something I never dealt with until I was in my early 40's as I was so ashamed and embarrassed that I had gone through that, I was under the care of a psychologist from the age of 10 because of my behavioural problems and was expelled from secondary school at the age of 12 because of my violence and fighting teachers and finally assaulting the headmaster with the cane he had tried to use on me for playing truant. There wasn't a school in Lancashire that would take me because of my problems so I was eventually placed in an approved school where I spent the next 4 years. There I started to box and was quite good at it until an accident where my eye was pooped out and damaged in a fight put paid to any future boxing. I started using alcohol from the age of 13 as it enabled me to escape from

the nightmares of life and it numbed the emotional pain. On leaving approved school at the age of 17 I began working in dead end jobs, and then found myself unemployed during the 80's when lots of companies were going bust and jobs were hard to come by. I did start working cash in hand for a wine company which was great as I had drink available at all times and along with another worker would put extra cases on the vans so that we could either sell them on or keep them for our own use. Alcohol and violence were a big part of my life from a young age and you could say a learned behavioural pattern.

At the age of 18 just a week or so before my 19th birthday I met Lynne my wife to be and fell in love with her, and we married 2 years later. I can honestly say that she has been a true blessing and a gift from God to me. In truth I don't know why she married me when

she did as she had seen the outbursts of anger in my drinking, and could quite easily have kicked me into touch but I'm happy she didn't.

We started our own family with our son Daniel being born in 1985 and our daughter Lauren being born in 1991. Alcohol continued to be a problem and was the main cause of the problems we went through and that was down to myself nothing that Lynne had done wrong. In the early years I wasn't the husband or dad to our children that I should have been. I always worked and then took a part time job as a bouncer in the nightclubs and was in heaven as I was in a place where I could drink freely and take out my anger and frustrations on those who were causing problems in the clubs. This led to me becoming involved with a very undesirable element of people and my causing a lot of pain and anguish to others

something that I am far from proud of. My drinking and behaviour were destroying not just myself but Lynne and my marriage and at one-point Lynne was considering seeing a solicitor to start divorce proceedings. Lynne has a sister called Sharon who had started courting with a guy called Alan who was a born-again Christian, and who I employed when I worked for Coca-Cola, and it was Alan who saw how bad things were and gave me the contact details of Laurence Hennessey who was the worker in England at that time with the Stauros Foundation. I did nothing with them for a time but eventually contacted Laurence and arranged to meet with him. When I first met Laurence he was honest enough to say that it was God not him that was the one who could change my life, and at that time I wasn't really interested as my thought would have been that if God was real then why did I go

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through what I went through as a child. I now know that God wasn't the cause of what happened, but the sinful nature of man was IE; my dad, just as my sinful nature was the cause of all the problems in my life. One thing I can say is that Laurence never gave up on us and he was the one who came out in the early hours of one morning when our house was full of police when I'd lost the plot. In February 1992 I met with Laurence after phoning him the previous evening knowing that I couldn't continue with my life as it was and that I needed to know more about this God who could change my life. We met the

following day and after speaking for some time I knew what I needed to do. I needed to repent and ask the Lord into my life; it was then that I asked God to forgive me and to accept me as his child. That was the first ever experience of having a father who loved me come what may. From that day on we as a family have never looked back. Yes, we have had problems like any family, but God has been with us throughout. My wife Lynne accepted Christ 5 months later, our son and daughter both asked the Lord into their lives aged 7 and we were then a complete family in the Lord. I knew within a few

months that the Lord's call was upon me to serve him and to work with those with addictions, and I began to do this voluntary with Stauros alongside Laurence Hennessey and then in 1994 when he and his wife Iris followed the call of God to establish the work in Southern Ireland I was asked to take up the baton and continue the work in England. I did this voluntary for another 4 years until myself and Lynne felt that it was right, I should step out in faith and serve God full time. After speaking with Arthur Williams, we agreed that I would be taken onto the staff with Stauros in September 1998. The Lord has been faithful to us throughout these years and we have been privileged and blessed to see our 2 children develop their own relationships with God. Our son Daniel married a young lady called Naomi and now have 3 young boys of their own, Daniel is now the pastor of his own church in Nuneaton but for 8 or 9 years

prior to that was the youth then associate pastor of a church in Fraserburgh. Lauren our daughter studied to be a teacher at Chester university and now lives in Kent working as a special need's teacher in a school there. Since 1998 I have worked throughout England and Wales travelling thousands of miles each year working with those who have addictions. I have been privileged to see many people set free from addiction and begin their own journey with the Lord. Since 2017 with God's leading I have been developing a work in the prisons getting alongside those with addictions and other problems and have seen a number of these men set free and accept Christ into their lives and to be involved in their baptism in the prison chapel.

God is so good and as his Word says he sets the captives free; I look forward too many more years of serving God and



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reaching out to those who are fighting addiction. My mission field is wide my joy is in serving the Lord and to be a member of the family of Stauros Foundation. It is a much-needed ministry and I believe now more so than ever. There is a great need in our communities and society, and only the Lord is able to bring true freedom and healing.

If you have been touched by reading this testimony, and wish to know Christ, whom Paul has been speaking of, you may begin by praying a prayer such as this,

Dear Lord, I feel as though my life is without hope: I have come to accept that my future holds no joy for me. I feel guilty at the thought of the life I have lived so far, and I feel hopeless. But I

believe Jesus holds the key to my life. I believe that he can set me free from my addiction and from my sin. I want to know Jesus for real. So Lord please reveal yourself to me. Please forgive me for all the sins I have committed and for the times I have done things that break your rules. Please cleanse my heart from all my sin and save my life. Help me to come alive in Christ and please send the Spirit of Christ to live in me from this moment on and for the rest of my life. Lord, I know you have something better for my life; you have a plan and purpose for me. I surrender myself to you now and ask you to take control of my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

From Violence

To Peace





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