

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

Donald H. Warner

It was 1971.

The view from my New York City office was spectacular. From one window I looked down on the Rockefeller Plaza Skating rink. From another window Sacs 5th Avenue and St. Patrick's Cathedral were in view.

I was in charge of the Eastern third of the country for my company, a full vice president, young and on the corporate rise. I can vividly remember standing at the window and staring down at the skating rink, thinking about all I had going for me—and how miserable I was!

I had a busy life, my energies raced from sky diving to classical music; from business achievements to racing hydroplanes. (I ran from the time I got up to whenever ...?)

But there was no fulfillment. The record book looked good and to hear me talk, or laugh, or debate the deep philosophies of life, you would think I had it altogether. As the successes came, my mailing address changed from Boston to New York City to Detroit to Indianapolis. The race kept going—the pace faster and the laughter louder.

But there were times when I knew in the very center of my being that something was not right—that something was missing. There had to be more! There was an aching to be ... to be fulfilled. But the logic, the philosophies, the reading, the victories did not fill that emptiness. Intuitively I knew I was not complete.

Along with success came the toys of success: parties, booze, money, recognition, power. But the price of those toys was very, very high: alienation from my family, an attempt to find fulfillment in activities, an awful, awful insatiable, unquenchable, insidious desire for more—more money, a bigger title, a higher high. But all of Satan's apples have worms! Sooner or later the piper must be paid!

And he was paid. I had become a ticking bomb of self-will run riot. It finally exploded. I lost everything: job, money, possessions. My wife Ruth helped me pick up the pieces. She will never know just how much she helped!

I started to search. The pieces began mending slowly. I searched for years and in many places for the something real that would fill that empty space inside of me. The search ended one evening in a pizza parlor in Carmel, Indiana.

The evening started at Hope Church on a Saturday night (of all places to be on a Saturday night)! There in church was my friend Dean Schultz who brought us, talking to me about Jesus Christ—out loud, how embarrassing!! What were the other people going to think?!

Later that same evening, in that pizza parlor, I prayed with my friend Dean and asked Jesus Christ to be Lord of all my life, King of my heart, and He did!! *Thank You, Jesus!*

There is so much I have not told and so much I would like to tell; but I feel compelled to close with the following incident.

Very shortly after becoming a Christian, the phone jolted me awake at 3:00 a.m. What an awful, chilling sound that is!! Fearfully I answered. The words cut through me like a knife—my 17-year-old son, Mike, had just died in a car accident.

I tell this story not because of the grief and pain but because of something I knew at that instant that only a Christian can know; for at the same instant the numbing reality of those words hit me, Jesus put His arm around me and I knew a peace that passes all understanding. I knew Mike was in Heaven. I knew and know I will see him there. I cannot explain it. It is God's Grace.

You see, I learned then, and continue to learn, that Christianity is not a toy, religion, or a crutch for the weak. It is the ultimate truth. The fulfillment of the purpose for which God created us; it is coming home. I learned that Christianity is a relationship—a personal, loving relationship with Jesus.

*Once I was blind, but now I see,
Once I would have wept in despair
Now I weep in anticipation of a glory to come.
Once I had an empty spot in the center of my soul. . .
Now it is filled.
Now I am complete.*

Thank You, Jesus.

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