

## *Father Leads the Way 1*

Paul McMillan

My Mother was born in Switzerland and came to this country with her family when she was about 12 years old. She was the oldest of 12 children and had a nominal Lutheran background. Soon she went out to work as a maid, governess, etc. for wealthy families to help her family financially. In this capacity she learned a great deal about cooking for different people so in her late teens or early 20ss she struck out on her own and opened a lunch room in Washington, D.C. (Her family was near Baltimore.)

Dad grew up in D.C. but his Mother died when he was young and he did not get along with his stepmother. So when he was very young he was on the streets selling newspapers and had no religious training. In fact he picked up the vices of the streets, smoking and drinking. He trained as a printer/linotype operator and married. However he had an affair with my Mother, she got pregnant and they skipped town moving to Sebring, Florida where my older brother was born in 1927. Soon the great depression was on them and they moved to Atlanta, GA. Dad got work at a newspaper and they bought a 3.5 acre property outside of town. Soon Dad had built a shack to live in at about the time I was born. We lived in that shack while Dad built a more permanent home. He was a good provider even though he was a binge drinker and heavy smoker. Of course there was no thought of going to church. But when I was about 4 years old and my younger brother had been born Mother suggested that perhaps the boys should start going to Sunday school.

There was a little country church only about 3 blocks away so they started taking us to church. When the church people learned that Dad was a printer they assumed he would make a good teacher and asked him to teach the adult Sunday School class. He accepted the challenge and began studying the Bible. He even enrolled in evening classes at a nearby Christian college. He was still drinking and smoking. In fact between Sunday School and the Worship service all the men would go outside for their smoke. Then he learned in the Bible that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and he began to see that he could not stand in front of the class with a Bible in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other. By the grace of God he quit drinking. It wasn't long after that he also quit smoking. I, as a small boy, watched my Father be transformed by the grace of God.

So it was when I was 6 or 7 that one Sunday I decided to participate in communion – taking the cracker and grape juice. When I asked Mother that afternoon if she had noticed she said, “Yes. Perhaps you should consider being baptized.” All that next week I planned to respond to the altar call (It was at the end of every sermon.). That Sunday the Pastor used Psalm 1 as his text and I accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord of my life.. So from that day to this, almost 70 years, I have dedicated my life to being a follower of Jesus. I have no regrets. God is faithful and keeps his promises.

I pray that you, too, will come to know Him as your best Friend.