
JOHN KERR

My Bio

*For the Lord GOD will help me;
therefore shall I not be confounded:
therefore have I set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be ashamed.
Isaiah 50:7*

BORN: AUGUST 26TH, 1964

DOVER, OHIO

My dad went to Detroit Bible college to study for the ministry When I was a year old. When I was eight, my sister began attending Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown WI, and dad transferred there to finish his college degree.

So, I grew up in a pastor's home. When I was thirteen, I discovered this verse:

*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.
Exodus 33:11*

I said, "God, I wanna know you like that. You said you are not a respecter of persons, so if you would walk with Moses like that, then you would walk with me like that." He has done that, right down to the 40 years in the backside of the desert (only he did it in 4).

When I was fifteen, I began preaching from time to time in the church my dad was pastoring. We moved to Waukegan IL, and I graduated from Lake County Baptist School in the National Christian Honor Society.

The next fall, I enrolled in Hyles Anderson College. I attended there for six years, and met my wife, Michelle. We married and could not afford to re-enroll in college. We moved to New York, where I took a job in industrial sales, and we led the junior church ministry at Perth Bible Church.

But I was angry...

When I was eighteen, I fell in love with a girl. The circumstances were so peculiar that I was convinced God had arranged it, and that I had met my mate for life. When that did not happen, my faith in being able to hear from God was shaken. How would I know? That doubt in God festered into anger. Every time there was a problem, I would blame my wife. Why not? How did I even know she was the right one? Even when I tried to be a good husband it did not work. Nothing was working.

Finally, my anger went to seed. I pulled my Dakota over to the side of the road. I said, "I'm done! Leave me the f#@* alone! I'll do this myself! When I tithe, I go in debt, and when I don't tithe, I go in debt. I will never teach or preach for you again! You can kill me, and I will not turn!"

SONGS
DELIVERANCE
MINISTRY.ORG
PO Box 804 Kenosha, WI 53141
Psalm 32:7

What did not work before worked even less now.

Finally, I gave up. I kept going because I was stubborn, but I did not think anything would ever change. A man who has no hope is dangerous because he will even hurt people he loves. He is only looking for a way to relieve his own grief, not thinking of how it will affect other people. So, my escape became child pornography, and then worse.

April 25th, 2014. I woke at 7:00 AM to a loud noise in my living room. Two of my children slept down there! Behind the door of the bathroom just outside my bedroom was a baseball bat. When I walked out of the bedroom, the person coming up the stairs was in a uniform and carrying a sidearm. I chose to leave the baseball bat where it was. It was going to be a beautiful day, in the seventies. We were going to barbecue. Instead, by the end of the day, my kid's dad was in prison, and my ten children were living in four different homes.

On May 1st, I walked into my cell alone. As the heavy orange steel door clanged shut behind me, I was alone for the first time since that morning. I made my bed and sat down on it. The dam broke. I looked up and I said, "OK, you win. I'm done fighting you. This is not one of those "prison house conversions." This is unconditional surrender. If you get me out of here tomorrow, or if I don't walk out of prison until I'm 90 and there's no one to meet me at the gate, you have whatever is left of my life. I will not say "no."

I got an unmarked, King James Version Bible from chaplain Claire Miller. I laid it on the desk, and I said, "Everything I believe is in that book. I grew up in a pastor's home. I started preaching when I was fifteen. I graduated from Christian School with honors. I went to Bible college. Here I sit in a prison. Apparently, I missed something. So, I'm gonna take that Bible and your Holy Spirit because you promised that he would guide me into all truth. Everything is on the table. Whatever you teach me from that book, I will believe even if it is different from everything I've ever believed."

I began to write down what he was teaching me, because I never saw the Bible open up to me like it began to that day. It is amazing what God will teach you when you stop telling him what he believes. I did not want to forget. God gave me a Bible study about Boaz in the book of Ruth. It was all the things I had failed to do as a husband, that Boaz had done, and put himself in the lineage of Jesus Christ. One night we were having a Bible study, and a man was explaining what he had done, and how he was afraid he was going to lose his marriage. The Holy Spirit said, "Give him a copy of that Bible study I gave you." That moment, though I did not know it, Songs of Deliverance Ministry was born. By the time I left prison 5 1/2 years later, he had given me about 60 Bible studies. We had passed out hundreds upon hundreds! There were fourteen volunteers working for the ministry. I would send home the master copy of each Bible study and my mother, my brother, and their secretary at my parent's church would make copies of it and send them back. I had a man helping in the prison who took orders and then delivered the Bible studies. Often, I did not even know about the orders or who was getting them. He would just come to me and say, "I need 5 copies of #15, and 10 copies of #12, and 10 copies of #35."

The Lord told me to begin a branch of Songs of Deliverance Ministry called Repatriate Friendly.

1. We will provide the men in prison spiritual training through the Bible studies and other resources. Then we will provide occupational training; job skills, writing a resume, how do I apply for a job on a kiosk or a website, etc. At the end of this program, the enrollee will receive a certificate. I will present the program to potential employers. Then the graduate of the program can take the certificate to the employer and the employer will agree to give them a job.
2. We will provide a home where these men can move upon their release from prison. This will give them a job, and a place to start until they can get a place of their own.
3. We will provide a ride from the prison to this home.

As of this date, I have presented the program to my employer. He enthusiastically took my information, and said, "You send these guys to me!" About a month ago, I was able to move into a five-bedroom house. We can now house four of these men when they release from prison. Glory to God!

When this ministry began to grow from within the prison, I said, "Lord, if you're going to bless this ministry, then please bless it in a way that people will not be able to say, "Look what John Kerr did!" They will have to say, "Look what God did!"

I had sent a request to Claire Miller for a book, Strike the Original Match by Chuck Swindoll. The next day, Jon Doi came up to my wing at Lake County jail to let me know that they did not have the book in the library. He asked me if I would mind if he talked to me for a while. He left 2 1/2 hours later. He came back the next day and spent another 2 1/2 hours until they ran him out for shift change! In these last seven years, no one has invested more personal time in my life than Jon.

I told God, "If you can use what I've been through to help someone else, I'll do whatever you tell me to do."

I still don't like to talk about what I did. God let me know that, to do this ministry, I would need to be willing to talk about it. So, I do, but I try to give the devil as little time as possible. I don't like to talk about what he does, but...

I love to tell the story

Of unseen things above

Of Jesus in his glory

Of Jesus and his love

I love to tell the story

Because I know 'tis true

It satisfies my longing

As nothing else can do.

To God be the glory!

John Kerr