



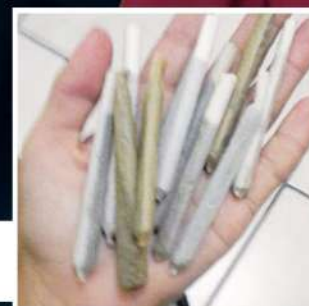
# DRUGS

## AND THE EVIL BEHIND IT

Learn what to do to take your life back

Read Ingrid's story on page 6

I WOULD SMOKE AND QUICKLY BLACK OUT



Page 2  
**Bishop Edir Macedo**  
The Power of Fasting



**SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

**NOT TO BE SOLD**



## | IN THIS EDITION |

### Addiction and the evil behind it

When we think about addiction, we often don't realize just how dangerous it can be. According to the Oxford Dictionary, addiction is "the fact or condition of being dependent or fixated on a particular substance, thing, or activity." Addicts are often driven by compulsion, acting without regard for the cost of their addiction. The scariest part? Many people struggling with addiction don't even realize they're addicted.

We're familiar with common addictions like cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, and gambling. But there are other addictions that don't get as much attention, such as gaming, caffeine, food, and even hoarding. Many dismiss these as mere habits, but anything that starts to control your daily life and makes you dependent on it is an addiction.

What many people don't understand is that addiction often has a spiritual root and can be fueled by evil forces. God's word in Ecclesiastes 3 teaches us about balance—there's a time for everything, but discipline and moderation are key. When we lose that balance, we open the door to spiritual struggles.

Addiction works in a cycle: the person starts with a desire, which grows into a craving and eventually becomes a need they can't bear to live without. But ask yourself: what has addiction cost you or your family? For some, it's taken their health, home, career, or even life. Are you or someone you love facing the grip of addiction? It's not too late to break free. Join us this Friday at a Universal Church near you to learn how to overcome addiction and reclaim control of your life.

## | BEATING DEPRESSION |

Depression is more than just sadness—it's a deep, overwhelming sorrow that affects the very core of a person. It brings feelings of hopelessness and creates a heavy void that drains motivation, making even the simplest tasks seem impossible. In severe cases, depression can make people lose the will to live. It's like a sickness of the soul. But who can heal the soul? Only the Savior, the Lord Jesus, has the power to restore a troubled heart.

Every Sunday, The Universal Church opens its doors to those seeking to overcome depression. If you need support, we invite you to visit a nearby branch. By joining a **Chain of Prayer**, where you attend prayer meetings for seven consecutive weeks, you'll find spiritual strength through powerful prayers, practical guidance, and personal counseling.

You are not alone in this battle. Thousands around the world have shared their stories, proving that a Chain of Prayer can truly make a difference. You can be the next success story. You can overcome depression!



**Bishop Edir Macedo**



### The Power of Fasting



**"Why did Jesus speak to the apostles about FASTING, and not with the father and his son?"**

*"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.'" — Matthew 17:19-21*

**J**ust before this moment, a father had come to Jesus, desperate for his son's healing. His son exhibited symptoms similar to bipolar disorder, frequently throwing himself into fire or water. Yet, when the disciples attempted to help, they couldn't cast out the spirit afflicting the boy.

In response, Jesus asked them to bring the boy to Him. With authority, He cast out the spirit, and immediately, a miracle took place. But why did Jesus talk to the disciples about fasting rather than speaking to the father or the boy about it?

The answer is simple. How can we ask someone who is suffering deeply—someone troubled, mentally unwell, and tormented by spiritual forces—to bear the burden of fasting? This boy's mind and actions were under the influence of evil forces; he lived in constant distress, unable to make such decisions for himself.

That's why fasting was intended for those with the responsibility and authority to bring deliverance, healing, and support—especially to those who cannot fight for themselves. Jesus made it clear that fasting and prayer are essential tools for those called to serve, to help them deliver others from suffering.

Let's consider the impact we can have. As servants of God, whether with or without titles, we can use the power of fasting and prayer not only to strengthen our own faith but to help the many people who rely on us to act. When we fast, we bring God's power into action, enabling us to help free others from the grip of evil.



### "I looked happy, but I was dying inside."

to fund our addictions. I'd often drink and smoke to get the courage to go through with it. I needed money, and I was willing to do whatever it took to get it. But after one of my friends was killed by a crowd after being caught robbing, I decided to stop stealing, though the cravings didn't go away."

a job.

As he continued attending church, James made the decision to be baptized in water. "I wanted a fresh start in God's presence and wanted Him to lead my life," he explains. Inspired by the pastor's teachings on the Holy Spirit's power to transform, he began seeking the Holy Spirit and dedicating himself more fully to God.

Today, James has been completely freed from addiction. "I no longer drink, smoke, or watch anything harmful. I don't crave it anymore. I live as a law-abiding citizen. God provides for me and looks after me, but most importantly, He is in control of my life," James shares.

One day, members from the Universal Church who were evangelizing in his area invited James to a service. "On my first day at church, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace, like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders. That feeling made me want to go back." He joined chains of prayer on Fridays for deliverance and on Mondays for his finances. Not long after, he was blessed with

James lost both his parents when he and his siblings were very young, leaving them to be raised by relatives. The pain of losing his parents drove him toward addiction, and by the age of 10, he was already drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. He spent most of his time partying and eventually dropped out of school.

"My friends and I didn't work, so we started robbing people

**BEAT DEPRESSION**  
BEATING DEPRESSION THROUGH THE POWER OF FAITH!

Call 1.888.332.4141  
Text 1.888.312.4141  
For more information  
SEE PAGE 12 FOR LOCATIONS



# See what's happening on Sundays



## "A miracle of healing"

"The doctors said that only a miracle could save my life"

"I overcame bowel cancer at a time when hope seemed lost. At just 18 years old, I began fainting and experiencing severe stomach pains. My abdomen swelled, and I quickly lost my appetite; everything I tried to eat came back up. It was clear something was seriously wrong, and I was soon hospitalized for a battery of tests and surgeries.

When the diagnosis of bowel cancer came, the doctors told my mother that only a miracle could save me. In those dark moments, my mother remained my rock. She would always bring me blessed water, and the church assistants regularly came to pray for my healing. Their support provided a glimmer of hope in my darkest hours.

After undergoing three cycles of chemotherapy, the doctor requested new tests before my final treatment. When the results came back, it was nothing short of a miracle: I had been completely healed. I am forever grateful for the power of faith and the support of my family and the church during this challenging journey."



Andressa,



## A journey from disability to healing

"I experienced three strokes, and when I was discharged from the hospital, I felt like a vegetable. I couldn't move or do anything for myself, relying entirely on others for help around the house. Despite my situation, I refused to accept my illness as my new reality.

When I finally went, I received powerful prayers and drank the blessed water.

**TODAY**

Today, I am free! When I returned to see the doctors, they were astonished by my recovery. They told me I looked healthy inside and out. I even have medical proof of my improvement, and I am incredibly grateful for the healing I have received." - Marie



**TODAY**

## Overcoming a bacterial infection and kidney stone

"I was diagnosed with a 22-millimeter stone in one of my kidneys, along with a bacterial infection known as KPC, which I contracted during my hospital stay.



**BEFORE**

This infection could cause paralysis of the organs, and despite taking various medications, nothing seemed to work. I started losing weight and even my hair, and I realized that only a miracle could save me.

In my time of desperation, my husband brought me the blessed water, and I drank it with faith. I refused to accept the sickness any longer and fought back with determination. Through my faith and perseverance, I am now completely healed." — Tacyana



Receive the healing waters this Sunday at your nearest Universal Church

**HEALING WATERS**





| MESSAGE |

Bishop Joshua

## NO LONGER BOUND



The only release for something that is bound, is for it to be loosed. Imagine this: someone so engulfed by problems and evil that even their physical stature is affected.

This was the case of the woman bent over for 18 years. Her problem was more than physical. The Bible describes her as being loosed from a spirit of infirmity.

*“Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.”*  
(Luke 13:10-11)

And you? What has burdened you so you cannot raise yourself? Perhaps you are not physically bent over but you recognize the effect of evil in your life. You search high and low but cannot find joy, you cannot sleep or are always anxious. You are tightly bound and looking for a release. Your release comes from the same place as that woman from the Bible.

*“But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.’ And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”*  
(Luke 13:12-13)

That same freedom is made available to you today. Jesus is calling you to release you from whatever has been troubling you. If you believe, The Lord Jesus can make your way straight right now, you simply have to go to Him. Maybe you even ask yourself, why He would do such a thing for you. Well, your freedom means that His name will be glorified through you. That’s reason enough don’t you think?

May the God of the Bible bless you!

October 2024 Bible Reading						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Ecclesiastes Ch. 1	2 Ecclesiastes Ch. 2	3 Ecclesiastes Ch. 3	4 Ecclesiastes Ch. 4	5 Ecclesiastes Ch. 5
6 Ecclesiastes Ch. 6	7 Ecclesiastes Ch. 7	8 Ecclesiastes Ch. 8	9 Ecclesiastes Ch. 9	10 Ecclesiastes Ch. 10	11 Ecclesiastes Ch. 11	12 Ecclesiastes Ch. 12
13 Malachi Ch. 1	14 Malachi Ch. 2	15 Malachi Ch. 3	16 Malachi Ch. 4	17 Romans Ch. 1	18 Romans Ch. 2	19 Romans Ch. 3
20 Romans Ch. 4	21 Romans Ch. 5	22 Romans Ch. 6	23 Romans Ch. 7	24 Romans Ch. 8	25 Romans Ch. 9	26 Romans Ch. 10
27 Romans Ch. 11	28 Romans Ch. 12	29 Romans Ch. 13	30 Romans Ch. 14	31 Romans Ch. 15 & 16		

## THE DANGER WAS CLOSE

While many hear about overdose deaths from the news, countless families have faced the devastating reality of losing loved ones to drugs. This was almost the story of 21-year-old Victor de Souza. “I grew up in the church but distanced myself because of ‘friends’ at school. A girl I liked used marijuana and introduced me to it. I wanted to be with her, so I accepted, which led me to other drugs and eventually into the world of crime.”

Victor started dealing drugs and committing robberies, sometimes traveling to distant cities for theft. “I knew people who died from overdoses or from the violence surrounding drugs. I feared the same could happen to me, but I felt trapped. I hit rock bottom when I got arrested and began attending Universal Church services in prison. I resisted at first, but soon I started thinking about how peaceful and joyful life had been when I was strong in my faith. I made a vow to God: if He got me out, I would change.”

However, after his release, Victor returned to his old habits, ignoring his promise. One day, while smoking in a park, he was confronted by an armed man, angered by Victor’s presence near his home. The man shot at Victor, and one bullet grazed his ear. That day, Victor remembered his vow and decided to change his life for good. He returned to the Universal Church, began a Chain of Prayer for deliverance, got baptized, and sought the Holy Spirit. “Receiving Him changed my life completely—I no longer needed drugs. I was free.”

Victor now shares his message with others struggling with addiction: “Sometimes, you feel trapped in a world with no way out, telling yourself you’ll quit but not being able to. I would smoke up to 14 joints a day and countless cigarettes. But going to the Universal Church helped me realize that through faith, I could break free. The more I attended services, the more I understood God’s power and will for me. People there encouraged me to change rather than judge me. That support allowed me to let faith lead me to freedom.”

He emphasizes that faith requires perseverance: “Even if you don’t believe change is possible, go. It’s the best opportunity. I tried many ways to quit drugs before, but only faith worked. Doing my Chain of Prayer with a true desire to change was crucial. My small seed of faith grew as I attended meetings, and that’s how I freed myself.”

Victor is now a successful businessman in the internet and cable TV industry, grateful for his transformation and for finding faith.

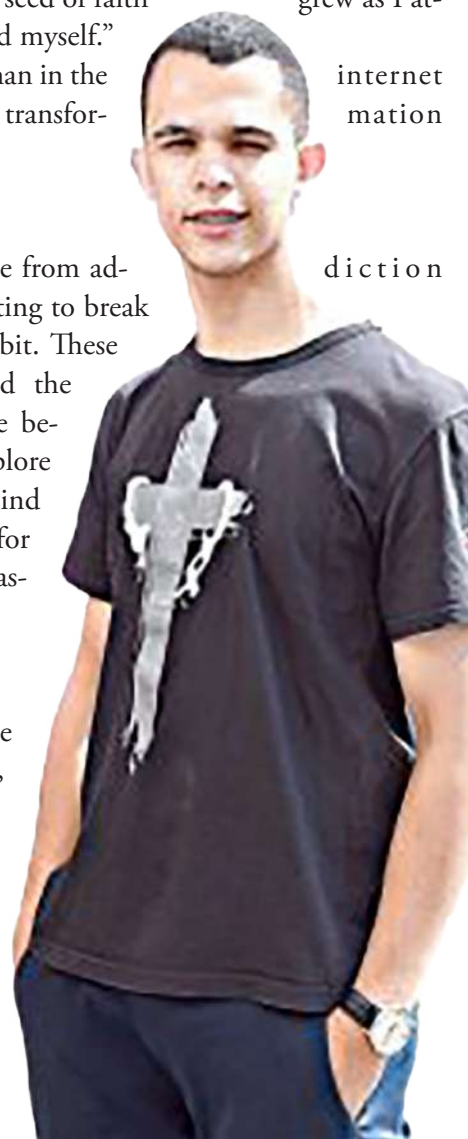
### How it works

The Chain of Prayer for deliverance from addiction offers a practical path for anyone wanting to break free from drugs or any destructive habit. These sessions help participants understand the root of harmful, often uncontrollable behaviors that feed addiction. They explore how addiction impacts a person’s mind and life, providing tools and guidance for lasting freedom with the help of compassionate pastors and trained assistants.

### Who can attend?

These meetings are open to anyone struggling with any type of addiction, along with family members and friends who want to support their loved one. Whether you’re seeking information, support, or a way out, you’re welcome to join—no matter your religious background or beliefs.

Learn more at a Universal Church near you.





# What's happening at the Universal Church



## I Lost 4 Years of My Life to Addictions



From the very first day, I felt something change. I kept attending and committed to the chain of prayers for deliverance. Today, I'm free from addiction, and God has restored my relationship with my family. I earned a degree in renewable energy and environmental science and even own my own tourism company. I'm happily married and have found complete happiness!"  
— Adilson



"I was always a calm, respectful young man, but that changed when I turned 17 and started working. Through my job, I got involved with the wrong crowd and quickly fell into a life of nightlife and addiction. For four years, I was lost in my addiction. Things spiraled out of control until I found myself in jail.

I had already drifted from my family, but addiction drove us further apart. I vividly remember the night my brother passed away in a car accident. My family was all together, mourning, but instead of staying with them, I left for the club. It was as if I couldn't stop myself.

One night, unable to sleep, I flipped through TV channels and came across the Universal Church program. Tired of suffering, I decided to go to church.

**Breaking free from addiction**  
Addictions are often fueled by spiritual forces that block a person's ability to reason and find the strength to overcome them. If you or someone you know is feeling trapped by spiritual oppression, you may need strong prayer for deliverance. The Universal Church invites you to join our Deliverance and Spiritual Cleansing services held every Friday at 7 a.m., 10 a.m., noon, 4 p.m., and especially at 7:30 p.m. Our pastors are here to support you in finding freedom and reclaiming control over your life. Visit a Universal Church near you and take the first step toward true freedom.

## From drug addiction to complete happiness

Andreia Pereira once tried to fill the emptiness inside her with drug addiction, but through faith, she found true freedom. She overcame years of suffering and addiction to find peace and joy. Here, she shares her journey of transformation and how faith played a key role in her recovery.

**A life with no meaning**

"My life was complicated, full of ups and downs, and felt completely meaningless. I had a huge emptiness inside me that I tried to fill with alcohol, drugs, bad relationships, and even prostitution. I sought happiness in things and people, but every time I got home, I'd be overwhelmed by sadness, pain, anguish, bad thoughts, and fear. My drug addiction lasted 12 years, and I reached a point where I was selling my body for drugs. I started with marijuana, but wanting something stronger, I moved on to cocaine. That was rock bottom—the worst moment of my life," she recalls.

**An invitation to change**

One day, a member of the Universal Church invited Andreia to join a prayer group held at a neighbor's house. She felt a sense of peace there and soon began attending church services daily.

"I started a chain of prayer, coming on



Fridays for deliverance and Sundays for the Gathering of Faith and Miracles. The assistants at church taught me how to use blessed oil to anoint myself whenever I felt tempted to drink or smoke and to strengthen my faith by drinking blessed water. Little by little, I broke free from my addictions and everything that was keeping me from God," she says.

**A new life**

"Through seeking God, fasting, and letting go of my old ways, I cleansed myself of everything holding me back and eventually received the Holy Spirit. My life has never been the same since. Today, I have a peace I never knew before, and I've found love. The assistant who invited me to the prayer group is now my husband, and together we are happy and complete," she says, smiling.

Andreia Pereira

# YPG USA



What's up y'all! Let's take a trip to our branch in Baltimore! In the YPG we are always ready to help and uplift the youths. We are never lacking the good vibes and can not wait to see you at our next YPG Meetup!

**Come join us every Sunday at 1PM!**



Through the Mega Help event, we got to hit the streets of Baltimore bringing awareness against suicide and self-harm in the lives of many youths. This event also contributed to a clothing drive, Free giveaways & Counseling to the Community.



IG: @help.ypg  
FB: Help YPG



I grew up tired of "the church life". I got tired of missing out on things because of church. I remember myself being cyber physically and mentally bullied, from there I got very depressed to the point where I also got suicidal. I began to self-harm myself; I would burn and cut myself in concealed places; I developed an eating disorder and I attempted suicide three times. I fell into this place of darkness, sadness, and anger. I was by myself in this empty void. I grew tired and sought help. The YPG helped me to open up to my family about my battles, and thankfully I'm now healed and accessible, assisting other youths who have a similar story to mine.

— Ameera



## Breaking free from addiction: The path to lasting freedom

According to the United Nations' World Drug Report 2023, over 296 million people used drugs in 2021—a 23% increase over the past decade. This rise is tied to several factors, including social and economic inequalities and the increasing relaxation of drug policies worldwide.

Research shows that addiction harms the mind and body in countless ways. Studies indicate that marijuana use, particularly in adolescents, can lead to difficulties with concentration and memory. Addictions like pornography, considered harmless by some, can lead to depression, anxiety, and unhealthy relationships, leaving individuals even more vulnerable. Addiction often stigmatizes individuals as weak or inferior for seemingly “losing control.” Yet, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines chemical dependency as a chronic, progressive, and fatal disease—a real threat to life.

At the Universal Church, Deliverance meetings are held every Friday to help those struggling with addiction understand that the root issue is not the substance or behavior itself but the oppressive spiritual force that drives the addiction. By confronting and removing this force, individuals can experience freedom from cravings and destructive habits. However, achieving this freedom requires commitment to the guidance given at the Altar. True transformation comes through following the discipline of the deliverance services.

Millions of people have attended these meetings and found genuine healing. You and your loved ones can receive this freedom, too. See the back page for a Universal Church location near you.



## Addiction and the Evil behind it

“I would smoke and then quickly black out.”

Ingrid's journey into addiction began early. "At the age of 14, I discovered cigarettes through friends. Later, I found marijuana and cocaine," she recalls. Her turn to drugs was a means to escape the trauma of childhood abuse at age 7. "The pain inside me was so great that I developed depression until I discovered K2. I would smoke it and black out almost immediately. For a while, I liked that—I wanted to black out," she explains.

Years passed in this spiral until, during a moment of despair, she broke everything in her house. "I picked up a piece of glass and cut myself all over because I wanted to die," she says. Treated in the emergency room, she was soon referred to a psychiatric hospital. "That was my lowest point," Ingrid reflects.

Having known about the work of the Universal Church, Ingrid decided to seek a higher power for help. "My first step was letting go of the unforgiveness and hurt that



had been consuming me.

The first Sunday after I left the hospital, I went to church and was baptized in water," she shares. By following the guidance she received in the deliverance prayers on Fridays, Ingrid freed herself from addictions, destructive friendships, and everything else that had been holding her back.

“Today, I have the Holy Spirit, which is the most precious thing in my life. It is because of Him that I live and no longer have the desire to die. I have peace, I’m happy with my family, and I have a blessed job. Now, I help people who have faced the same struggles I once had,” Ingrid concludes with gratitude.





# “I was addicted for 15 years.”

Leonardo's path into addiction began with a single encounter with marijuana. "Over time, I started using cocaine, and eventually, I got involved with all kinds of drugs and even crime," he recounts. Despite thinking he could control his situation, addiction soon took over. "I lost my family's trust, couldn't get along with anyone, and couldn't hold down a job. My family became the streets and the criminals," he says.



Desperate to reclaim his dignity, Leonardo sought the help of a psychologist. But her prognosis was bleak. "She told my family that there was no way out for me—only hospitalization or the grave," he remembers.



Overwhelmed and disillusioned, he began spending days in drug dens and even attempted suicide. Eventually, he returned home, where he received an invitation to attend a deliverance

service at the Universal Church. He recalls, "I went, received a prayer, and immediately felt lighter. Wanting that peace to stay with me, I began attending services every Sunday and other days of the week to strengthen myself spiritually." After 15 years of dependency, Leonardo was freed. "I didn't relapse or experience cravings. Today, I have peace at home, no depression, and I am happy. I am a good father, a good son, and proof that addiction can be cured," he concludes.

service at the Universal Church.

Tania first joined the Universal Church at 18 but struggled to build a strong spiritual foundation. Years later, at nearly 32, she was overwhelmed by the pain of losing two nephews, leading her to turn away from God. "I rebelled and distanced myself. I asked for a separation from my husband and drowned myself in alcohol," she shares.



Tania's career gave her a sense of control, but her life soon spiraled. "I thought I could stop anytime, but my relationships began to suffer, and I started losing my dignity. I'd spend nights in bars and clubs, drove drunk, and even crashed my car, landing me in jail for four days," she recalls. Despite this, she continued her downward path. After starting a relationship with a heavy drinker, things escalated into conflicts, and one fight ended in violence. "I went to file a police report while intoxicated and was arrested for drunk driving and contempt of court," she admits.

rebelled, humiliating myself in ways I never thought possible." Once sober, she felt deep regret and reached out to God. The next day, she was released and returned to church, determined to change. "I made a vow to God, attended deliverance services, and cut ties with everything tied to my past addictions," she says.

Tania has been sober since and now dedicates her life to sharing her story of faith and redemption. "My family is overjoyed by my transformation, and today, my focus is on helping others find the same faith."

While detained, Tania hit rock bottom. "I couldn't accept being arrested again and

MAKE A



IT WORKS!

A Chain of Prayer is when you attend a prayer meeting for a certain number of weeks without interruption in order to see a breakthrough in your life. Whether it is healing, a financial breakthrough or spiritual deliverance that you need, a Chain of Prayer helps you develop the faith and determination to overcome.

Monday - Strong Nation  
7am, 10am, 4pm & 7pm



Learn the secrets to overcome financially. Receive direction to grow and become a successful person.



Tuesday - Prayer for healing  
7am, 10am, 4pm & 7pm

Receive prayers for your physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Wednesday - Night of Salvation  
7am, 10am, 4pm & 7pm



A meeting will be held for those who want to invest in a genuine relationship with God.



Thursday - Family & Love Therapy  
7am, 10am, 4pm & 7pm

The goal of the family meeting is to bring families together. No family is perfect, but they can be free from any hate, separation and other underlying issues.

Friday - Deliverance  
7am, 10am, 4pm & 7pm



There is a root to every problem. No issue can be dealt with permanently without removing its root. Every Friday, strong prayers is provided for anyone who is facing a problem that is influenced by negativity.



Saturday - Impossible Cases  
8am & 12pm

Have you ever looked at a problem or situation and thought, 'this is impossible, there is no solution to this?' If you want to see the 'impossible become possible', join us every Saturday.

Sunday - Gathering of Faith & Miracles  
7am, 10am, 3pm & 6pm



These meetings aim to help people connect with God, to empower people and teach them how to use their faith to achieve what they want in their lives.





# Universal Beyond Bars

You are **NOT** alone

## The power of transformation

My name is Willian, I'm 29. Growing up, my childhood was peaceful. My parents had a strong marriage, and I had a good relationship with my siblings. But I was a curious kid, eager to try anything new. That curiosity led me to try marijuana for the first time with classmates at



school. Not long after, at a wedding, I ran into an acquaintance who was desperate for drugs but had no money. I offered to help him out, and that night I tried cocaine for the first time. I loved it.

“

For a while, I felt like I was on top of everything. I went to school, worked, and thought I was balancing it all. But soon, what I thought I was controlling began to control me.

I started dealing drugs in school, then in my neighborhood, and eventually got into full-on trafficking. My addiction took over.

I dropped out of school, went to work high, and it was so common that no one thought anything of it. But inside, I knew I was hurting my family. My parents tried talking to me, but nothing helped.

Then, an opportunity came up to work in another state. I thought it would be a fresh start and maybe

help me quit. But instead, I got worse. With more money and fewer restrictions, my



addiction spiraled. I eventually returned to live with my parents, even attended church with them at the Universal Church, and I stayed clean for a while.

But I wasn't fully committed. One night, I did the unthinkable: I took money I had set aside as my tithe, and I used it to buy drugs. That night, I crossed paths with a stranger who convinced me to join him in robbing a car.

I almost went through with it but decided to walk away. On my way home, I was stopped by an undercover officer, who suspected me in the robbery. I was arrested and sent to jail for the first time in my life.

Prison shook me to the core. I couldn't believe I had ended up there. I could see anger, frustration, and pain in the faces of everyone around me.

Then, the UBB ministry came to hold a service, and I decided to take it seriously. I absorbed everything they taught, and I put it into practice.

During those six months, I committed to change, and when I was released, I made sure to be baptized and surrendered completely to God.

I cut ties with the bad influences in my life and dedicated myself to seeking the Holy Spirit. I remember a night vigil that I prepared myself for;

I knew deep down it would be the night I received the Holy Spirit. It was 3 AM when I finally went before the altar, and I poured out my heart.

In a moment of stillness, I felt it: I knew God was with me. I left that vigil filled with joy and purpose, knowing I had received salvation.

Today, my life is completely transformed. I have a loving relationship with my family, my parents are proud, and I've returned to school and earned my degree.

I now have a career, and the Holy Spirit is my source of peace, strength, and security.



No matter what happens, I know that I am safe in His presence.”



“If I had the choice, I would disappear right now...”

STOP! Help is at hand. Send your E-Message or letter to Bp. Bira Joshua, you don't need to feel alone. There is help for you. Write your letter to: 7075 SW. Fwy. Houston, TX 77074. If you want to be added to Bp. Joshua's E-Message let him know in your letter and he will add you!

Include: First/Last name, Inmate ID #, Facility name, Complete Address, City/State, and Zip Code



# It's about power!

Imagine a product that claims to make you look younger and achieve flawless skin in no time. It pops up in ads everywhere—on social media, in magazines, and even on billboards—promising to transform your appearance almost overnight.

The buzz surrounding it sounds impressive, and you can't help but feel a glimmer of hope. However, after trying it, you quickly realize it falls short of its promises. Instead of the radiant skin you envisioned, you're left feeling disappointed, as if you've been tricked into believing in something that wasn't real.

This experience might feel familiar. Think about the times empty words have let you down in your own life. Perhaps someone once promised you a fantastic job opportunity, only for it to vanish without a trace.

You may have visited a doctor who confidently assured you they could cure your illness, only to discover the treatment didn't work as hoped. Maybe someone you loved made grand promises about building a future together, but in the end, it was all just talk, and you found yourself feeling lost and alone.

You might have even made promises to yourself to break free from an addiction, only to find yourself trapped again. These empty promises can leave deep scars, making you feel hurt, betrayed, and disillusioned.

In the midst of such disappointments, it's crucial to remember that there is one who will never let you down: God.

The Bible reminds us in 1 Corinthians 4:20: "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power."

This powerful statement speaks volumes. God's kingdom is not built on empty promises or hollow words; it's about the profound and transformative

things He can accomplish in your life. Unlike fleeting trends or false hopes, God offers genuine change and healing.

Are you yearning to witness God's power at work in your life? Are you fatigued by the cycle of empty promises that surround you? Do you long for something extraordinary to happen, something that can truly transform your reality? Well, here's the good news—God is ready and willing to meet you where you are!

You don't need to dress up or put on a façade. Come to God just as you are, with all your struggles and doubts. He invites you to bring your burdens to Him and trust in His ability to change your life for the better. When you surrender your worries and trust Him wholeheartedly, you open the door to experience His incredible power in action.

Imagine the possibilities! Picture yourself stepping into a life filled with purpose, joy, and fulfillment. Are you excited to see what God can do in your life? Take that leap of faith! Embrace the journey of trusting Him, and get ready for something extraordinary to unfold.

When it comes to God's kingdom, it's not just about words—it's about real, transformative power that can change everything. Let go of the empty promises and embrace the truth of God's love and strength. Your life can become a testament to His greatness!

**HEY THERE! HAVE YOU WATCHED THE LATEST VIDEO ON THE UBB?**



**UBB  
Universal Beyond  
Bars**

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# The Journey from Struggle to Faith.

**I**t was in mid-2005 when Jane Araujo, a 44-year-old collection analyst, first walked through the doors of the Universal Church. I freed myself from my addiction to alcohol, the emptiness, and the sadness that had weighed me down for so long. I struggled with feelings of inferiority, believing I could not move forward in life. These inner conflicts left me feeling bitter," she shares.



She recalls that the first transformation she experienced through her newfound Faith happened deep within her: "I overcame my insecurities, fears, doubts, and uncertainties. The more I immersed myself in Faith, the more peace I found." This profound experience with God sparked a deep desire within her to share her journey: "I wanted to go out and talk about the Lord Jesus so that others could discover the God I had come to know," she shares. Jane became a dedicated volunteer in the church but after four years, her commitment to serving God wavered, and His Presence began to fade from her priorities.

As she grappled with thoughts—once clear and hopeful—of achieving a better life, Jane gradually found herself drawn more toward fulfilling her ambitions. "In my pursuit of a better financial future, I threw myself into work, hoping to see results.



**"The weight of my financial struggles often felt suffocating."**

I was desperate to improve my situation, but in my eagerness, I lost sight of what truly mattered. I became so focused on earning money that I neglected my spiritual well-being. It's easy to get caught in this trap; by shifting our focus, we can fade away spiritually, grow weaker, and lose the desire to sit at

the feet of the Lord Jesus. In my quest for stability, I drifted away from the Church and from God's Presence," she admits with a heavy heart.

"I started to fall back into the old habits of drinking, partying, and surrounding myself with the wrong company. I spent my paycheck on fleeting pleasures, trying to fill the emptiness that had crept back into my soul. Instead of investing in my spiritual growth and family, I wasted my earnings on temporary escapes. One night out, I found myself in a frightening situation where some women were scheming to attack me, though I didn't understand why. I ended up on the ground, having been struck in the head, and when I touched it, I was horrified to see blood pouring from my wound. The next day, I was left to reflect on my life choices. That wasn't the life I was meant to lead."

Jane spent 12 long years away from God's Presence, but tired of the reality she had created for herself, she decided to seek out the nearest Universal Church three years ago. "God gave me another chance to return to His loving embrace. Inside, I was shattered, bitter, and lost. Yet, I could feel God's loving care and guidance all around me. I realized that the life I was living wasn't for me, and still, I found myself stubbornly clinging to my nightlife. The joy I experienced was brief, and each morning I woke up feeling broken and sad. What motivated me to return was my deep

desire to experience true happiness—not just in parts but wholly. I dove into the Word of God, received a spiritual renewal, and with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I felt a powerful conviction that God was with me. The Holy Spirit is everything, and without Him, we can't truly dwell in God's Presence."

Jane emphasizes that it's not the achievements or blessings that fill a person's life, but the Holy Spirit: "When we have Him, we gain the strength to combat evil, and when challenges arise, we are anchored in Faith. It's like that Samaritan woman (described in the bible in chapter 4 of the book of John) to whom Jesus promised, "...whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst..." That was my life—I was parched, yearning for that Water, which is the Holy Spirit. He is the ultimate source of joy we can possess.

Today, I am a joyful, fulfilled woman with peace in my heart because my inner self has been beautifully transformed," she concludes with a radiant smile.







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