



## 5 hidden symptoms of the most dangerous type of depression

*Recognizing the illness that knows how to hide*



***"I used to pretend to be a happy person just to cover up the emptiness I felt inside."***

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*Read how Victoria beat depression*



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**Bishop Edir Macedo**

**Stuck in the dark**



**From homeless to businessman**

*Read his overcoming story on page 11*



*Read page 7 for more details.*



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## | IN THIS EDITION |

### The 5 hidden symptoms of the most dangerous type of depression

Spotting someone with depression seems easy, right? We often associate it with sadness, lack of motivation, and isolation. But the truth is, many people struggling with depression go unnoticed. Why? Because they suffer from hidden or high-functioning depression.

Most people recognize the common signs of depression, but there's a more dangerous kind—the one hidden in plain sight. Its symptoms are subtle, almost imperceptible. Sadly, many who suffer from hidden depression go unnoticed because they work hard to conceal their struggles. They fear being judged or becoming a burden, so they convince themselves that their depression will eventually fade away. They "fake it 'til they make it," emotionally and mentally detaching themselves while pretending everything is fine.

So, what are the five key signs of hidden depression that we should watch out for? (More details on page 6)

- Weight gain/loss
- Sleeping at night, sleeping during the day
- Does not accept criticism
- Numbness (emotionally)
- Fleeting joy

Depression can be triggered by many factors—sometimes even when there's no clear reason to feel sad or dissatisfied. This emotional and mental turmoil makes depression a crippling and potentially life-threatening condition.

But no matter what you're facing, what you've lost, or the thoughts that keep circling in your mind, there is a way out—and it doesn't have to be death. If you surrender your pain to God and allow Him to heal you, depression can become a thing of the past. Many have overcome it through faith, and so can you!

## | BEATING DEPRESSION |

Depression is more than just feeling sad—it's a deep, overwhelming sorrow that weighs down the soul. It brings feelings of hopelessness, drains motivation, and makes even the simplest tasks feel impossible. In severe cases, it can even rob people of their will to live. Depression isn't just a state of mind—it's 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 who are battling depression. If you need support, we invite you to visit a nearby branch. Join a Chain of Prayer—a seven-week commitment where you'll receive spiritual strength through powerful prayers, practical guidance, and one-on-one counseling.

You are not alone in this battle. Thousands around the world have found hope and transformation through faith, 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**



### Stuck in the dark

**T**he people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned." — Matthew 4:16

The people who sat in darkness represent those living in complete spiritual blindness. It's not that they lack religion or philosophical beliefs, but they lack intelligent faith—the kind that sets people free, regardless of whether they feel deserving or not. This faith comes through knowing the Truth found in the Word of God, as recorded in the Holy Bible.

Without the knowledge of Scripture, people are left without direction, without light... That's why so many find themselves in the waiting room of death. They live under the shadow of death—those who have been given no hope by doctors, those whose lives are falling apart. This also includes people battling depression and anxiety, those suffocated by despair, and even those contemplating giving up on life.

But for those stuck in darkness and those trapped in the shadow of death, there is one powerful, effective, and freely available cure: the Word that comes from the Mouth of God.



This knowledge awakens intelligent faith, a faith that meets the needs of anyone who believes. This faith is given by the Spirit of God in the right measure for every situation. The Word of God is the Great Light, and this Light has been shining since the birth of Jesus Christ. He is the Word of God made flesh.

That's why intelligent faith has nothing to do with religion—it's not about belonging to Church A, B, or C. It's about believing in the Word. This faith brings answers to everyone who believes—whether they feel worthy or not, whether they are saints or sinners. The Light shines for all who are in darkness, for all who sit in the shadow of death.



### "Battling depression and suicidal thoughts"

mates because deep down, I felt like an outcast.

After a while, I moved in with my parents and sister, but instead of feeling happy, I started comparing myself to her. She never went through the struggles I did. She attended a private school, while I went to a public school. I felt like the black sheep of my family. That feeling pushed me into depression. I couldn't sleep at night, and when I did, I had constant nightmares. I felt worthless and even started thinking about ending my life.

The day I planned to commit suicide, my mother invited me to attend a service at the Universal Church. After the service, the pastor counseled me. He told me to let go of the anger I had been holding

on to for so long and to forgive my parents. I left that day feeling different, as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

I started attending the Chains of Prayer on Wednesdays and Fridays, seeking deliverance from depression, suicidal thoughts, and anger. As I kept coming and practicing what I learned, my life began to change. Little by little, I was transformed.

Today, I am free from depression and suicidal thoughts. I no longer carry anger in my heart, and I have forgiven my parents. I sleep peacefully now. I was even able to finish my studies. Most importantly, I no longer feel rejected or unwanted because I know that God accepted me just as I was," said Emmanuel.

"Growing up, I was raised by my grandmother. She had to support four children on her own, but money was always tight, and because of that, we suffered a lot. We had no clothes, and many days, we went without food.

My parents lived in another city, where they raised and took care of my sister. I never understood why I was the one who had to stay with my grandmother. I felt rejected and unwanted, and that made me angry. At school, I started bullying my class-

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

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For more information  
SEE PAGE 12 FOR LOCATIONS



# See what's happening on Sundays.

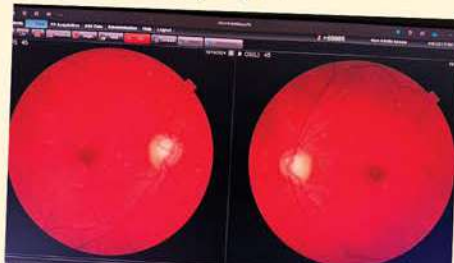
## Free from severe eye pain

Last year, around October, I started experiencing intense pain in my eyes, but I wasn't sure what was causing it. At first, I tried to bear the pain, hoping it would go away on its own. However, it became so severe that I ended up going to the emergency room. The doctors there prescribed an ointment for my eyes, but by the time I got home, the pain had worsened.

Three days later, I visited another doctor. She examined my eyes and noticed red and white spots, along with significant swelling. I realized that I had been drinking water from a well and started using that same water to wash my eyes.



It wasn't an immediate change, but little by little, the pain began to fade. I stopped using the medication in December, and since then, I've been completely free from pain. Today, I feel great—no swelling, no discomfort, and no pain at all.



## "Two hernias had ruptured in my body."

I got sick out of nowhere. Suddenly, I couldn't walk, clean myself, or do anything on my own. I was hospitalized for a while, and that's when I found out that two hernias had ruptured in my body.



One of the Bishops visited me in the hospital to pray and brought the blessed water. He poured some over me and encouraged me to use it by faith. I also drank the blessed water, believing in my healing. Since then, I've been using it—I even cook and bathe with it. Today, I feel great. I don't need therapy, I can walk on my own, and I am completely healed. – Pat

## "I can now move without pain."

I used to have terrible pain in my knees and arms. I couldn't bend over at all and spent two years unable to do so. But after receiving the anointing, everything changed.



The pain in my arm disappeared, and the pain in my knees is completely gone. Now, I can bend over and move freely without feeling any pain.



**Receive the healing waters this Sunday at your nearest Universal Church**



# Depressed No More!



| MESSAGE |

Bishop Joshua

What do you do when you face difficulties?



Everyone faces challenges, but how we respond can be very different. Some people might say, "I push through. I don't back down from problems." Others might admit, "I freeze. I never know how to handle tough situations."

No matter how you react, one thing is certain: we all face problems, and there's no escaping them. Some challenges are bigger than others, but at the end of the day, a problem is still a problem.

Here's a secret I want to share with you today: stop focusing on the problem! That's right. Instead, shift your focus to finding the solution and keep moving forward.

Problems have been around since biblical times, and they'll

always be part of life. Take Paul's experience, for example:

**"For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."**  
(1 Corinthians 16:9)

Paul saw an open door—a blessing—but he also faced opposition. Despite the challenges, he didn't give up. He kept going.

That's the best way to handle difficulties: don't stop. Keep moving.

ing, believe the doors are already open, and walk through them. Don't let fear or delays hold you back from the blessings waiting for you. Step forward boldly—you are the Paul of today!

May the God of the Bible bless you!

**Don't stop, keep going, believe that the doors are already open...**

Feb 2025 Bible Reading						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 ACTS 1 ✓
2 ACTS 2 ✓	3 ACTS 3 ✓	4 ACTS 4 ✓	5 ACTS 5 ✓	6 ACTS 6 ✓	7 ACTS 7 ✓	8 ACTS 8 ✓
9 ACTS 9 ✓	10 ACTS 10 ✓	11 ACTS 11 ✓	12 ACTS 12 ✓	13 ACTS 13 ✓	14 ACTS 14 ✓	15 ACTS 15 ✓
16 ACTS 16 ✓	17 ACTS 17 ✓	18 ACTS 18 ✓	19 ACTS 19 ✓	20 ACTS 20 ✓	21 ACTS 21 ✓	22 ACTS 22 ✓
23 ACTS 23 ✓	24 ACTS 24 ✓	25 ACTS 25 ✓	26 ACTS 26 ✓	27 ACTS 27 ✓	28 ACTS 28 ✓	

Carlos

**"I reached a point in life where I wanted to kill myself"**



Depression used to be my biggest struggle. I was involved in things that seemed normal—going to bars, spending time on stuff I shouldn't have. I wasn't an alcoholic, but I drank a lot. That alone created problems because I couldn't move forward in life. I had a job, but the depression held me back.

I felt alone all the time. I'd wander around New York City, searching for something I couldn't even define. There were people everywhere, but I still felt empty and isolated. I knew something was wrong, so I decided to see a psychiatrist. I went for a year, but it didn't help much. Eventually, he prescribed antidepressants and referred me to another doctor.

When you feel that alone, dark thoughts creep in. I started questioning if life was even worth it. Everything felt meaningless, and I didn't want to go on.

I worked evenings, and when I got home, I'd just watch TV. One night, while flipping through channels, I came across a church program. As I listened to people share their testimonies, I saw my own life reflected in their stories. That's when I thought, Why not give this a try?

I went to the church, and that's when everything started to change. I realized what I was missing—the presence of God in my life. The more I went, the more I felt a shift. I didn't feel the need for the antidepressants anymore. No one told me to stop, but I made the choice to throw them away and rely on God. I told myself, If God is real and powerful, then He can heal me.

I committed to a chain of prayers—Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. My deepest desire was to fill the emptiness inside me. Little by little, God's Word came alive in my life. The depression faded. I no longer needed the medication. I didn't feel the urge to go to bars or keep doing the things that pulled me down. The strong prayers on Fridays especially helped cleanse me from the inside out, giving me complete freedom.

Eventually, I stopped seeing the psychiatrist. I knew I didn't need it anymore—God had given me what I was desperately searching for: peace.

I started reading the Bible and seeking God more deeply. When I learned about the Holy Spirit, I pursued His presence with all my heart. And then it happened—God blessed me and baptized me with the Holy Spirit.

From that moment on, my life completely transformed. I finally felt peace and fulfillment. Since then, my biggest desire has been to share my story and tell others what God has done for me. If you're going through depression or any other struggle, know that God can change your life too. Give Him a chance today. Start your own chain of prayer and experience total freedom.

Mr Carlos

**The strong prayers on Fridays especially helped cleanse me from the inside out, giving me complete freedom.**



# What's happening at the Universal Church

## "Breaking the shackles of depression"



going.

At church, I came to understand that God not only loves and cares for me, but that nothing is impossible for Him. I started attending the Chains of Prayer on Fridays, seeking deliverance from depression, and little by little, my life started to change. I also went to the Wednesday services to grow spiritually. As I continued seeking God, my faith and understanding of His Word grew. I decided to get baptized in water because I wanted a fresh start in His presence.

Not long after, the church introduced the 21-day Fast of Daniel, and I chose to take part in it. I disconnected from social media and any form of entertainment so I could dedicate more time to reading the Bible and praying. On the day I received the Holy Spirit, I was alone at home. As I sought Him, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace.

From that moment on, my mindset changed. I had joy and the certainty that God was with me. I even started caring more for others, wanting their lives to change just as mine had. Today, I no longer feel empty or depressed. My boyfriend and I got married, and our marriage is a blessing. We are doing well financially, and God is prospering everything we do. Now, whenever I face challenges, I know exactly where to turn—God's Word," said Valencia.

After high school, I had no direction in life. My grades weren't good enough to get into college or university, and not long after I graduated, my mother passed away. The weight of it all was overwhelming, and I sank into depression.

I lost my appetite. Even when I was surrounded by people, I felt completely alone. I couldn't talk to my sisters about how I felt because they were always busy. No one knew the pain I carried inside. It felt like I was trapped in darkness, and nothing could bring me joy. There was a huge void in me that nothing and no one could fill, no matter how hard I tried.

Then I started a relationship with a young man, and he was the one who introduced me to the Universal Church. He invited me to attend a service with him, and from that moment on, I kept

## "I spent two years without getting out of bed"



I tried to explain what I was going through," she recalls.

Everything changed when Camila accepted an invitation to attend a service at the Universal Church. "I came to the church for an event, and the moment I stepped inside, I felt peace. But the real turning point was when I went to the Altar and surrendered all the pain in my heart—every wound from my past. I was completely honest with God. I laid everything on the Altar—the years of living in misery, the days spent in the trash, and even the words doctors had spoken over me. It was just a few minutes of talking to God, but when I opened my eyes, everything looked different. I felt light, filled with joy. In that moment, He took my depression away," she describes.

Her transformation was followed by a deep desire to know God and nourish her soul with His Word. Over time, her external life also began to change. Camila found the strength to invest in her marriage and develop her skills as a hairdresser. Today, she is dedicated to helping others who suffer from depression.

"I can tell anyone battling depression that there is a way out. When we surrender our lives to God, all the sadness and pain from our past lose their power over us," she concludes.

"I was born into hardship, raised by my grandmother in the middle of misery. There were many days when we had no food, no clothes, no shoes—not even a chair to sit on. Growing up with so many limitations made me a depressed child. Desperate to escape that life, I got married young, hoping things would get better, but nothing changed. My husband and I relied on donations for everything and even had to dig through the trash to find what we needed."

With no desire to live, Camila sought help from specialists. "I was in treatment for depression for two years and was hospitalized three times at a Psychosocial Care Center. I attempted suicide three times and gained a lot of weight. It felt like there was no way out. Depression took everything from me—even my speech. I stopped talking because I felt like no one understood me, no matter how hard



## Blessing of the YPG

A family that **PRAYS** together, **STAYS** together. At YPG, we truly believe in this. You don't have to face your problems alone—we're here to lend a helping hand to anyone going through challenges in life. **You matter. You are heard!**



**BE A PART OF SOMETHING GREAT!  
JOIN US EVERY SUNDAY AT 1PM**

## YOUTH TRANSFORMATION

### Sherly's testimony

Before coming to YPG, I felt completely hopeless and battled depression. I suffered from endless sleepless nights, spending hours locked in my room, smoking, and isolating myself. Suicidal thoughts constantly crossed my mind, and I felt like giving up on life.

Everything changed when someone invited me to the Universal Church, where I finally received the help I needed. Today, I have the Holy Spirit, and my mind is at peace. I no longer struggle with suicidal thoughts. I read my Bible more and have a strong desire to help other young people who are facing the same struggles I once did.



**REACH OUT TO US: 1 888 332 4141**



When you think of someone battling depression, certain signs likely come to mind—sadness, discouragement, loneliness. Most of us recognize these typical symptoms. But there's a more dangerous form of depression, one that often goes unnoticed because its signs are almost invisible.

Olivia Remes, an expert in anxiety and depression at the University of Cambridge, describes this lesser-known type as “**smiling depression.**” According to her, it's one of the most dangerous forms of the illness.

What makes smiling depression so alarming is that it doesn't display the classic symptoms. People who suffer from it often appear happy and functional in public. They smile, engage in conversations, go to work, and seem fine. But when they're alone, they're consumed by feelings of deep anguish and, in some cases, thoughts of suicide.

“The symptoms are often masked by false displays of happiness,” Remes explains. “And it's even harder to detect in people who seem to have no reason to be depressed—those with jobs, homes, friends, spouses, and children.”

Since the signs are subtle, it's easy for smiling depression to go unnoticed, even by close friends and family. But there are clues if you know what to look for. Here are some of the most common symptoms Remes highlights:

### 1. Gradual Weight Gain

This isn't the rapid or drastic weight change often associated with depression. Instead, it's a slow increase that seems harmless—just “a few extra pounds.” Because it doesn't raise health alarms, it often goes ignored.

### 2. Sleeping at Night, But Still Tired

Unlike typical depression, which often causes insomnia, people with smiling depression usually sleep through the night. But they still feel exhausted and drowsy during the day, leading to frequent napping or trouble staying focused.

### 3. Sensitivity to Criticism

On the surface, someone with smiling depression might seem overly defensive or arrogant. In reality, they're struggling with low self-esteem. Criticism, even minor, can feel overwhelming, as they subconsciously try to protect themselves from feelings of inadequacy.

### 4. Numbness in Limbs

A less obvious symptom is numbness in the arms and legs. Those suffering may rarely mention it, and even if they do, it's often dismissed as unimportant by others.

### 5. Fleeting Joy

Perhaps the most misleading sign is the person's ability to appear genuinely happy. Good news or social events can temporarily lift their spirits—they smile, laugh, and seem fine. But the joy is short-lived. Once alone, they're quickly overwhelmed by sadness and, in extreme cases, thoughts of self-harm.



**“The 5 hidden symptoms of the most dangerous type of depression.”**

People with smiling depression often feel invisible in their pain. They know something's wrong, but since no one else seems to notice, they feel isolated and insignificant. From the outside, their life looks perfect—family, friends, a career—but internally, they're fighting a silent battle.

Writer Núbia Siqueira describes the experience vividly: **“This disease steals the will to live and makes everything meaningless—family, work, money, friends. Nothing seems to matter.”** And in the darkest moments, when the internal anguish becomes unbearable, thoughts of suicide can surface. But there is hope.

“There's a cure for your pain, no matter how deep it feels,” says Núbia. “Jesus said, ‘Everything is possible for one who believes’ (Mark 9:23). That promise includes complete restoration—of your soul, your body, and your life.”

If you're struggling with depression or recognize these signs in someone close to you, don't stay silent. There's a path to healing. The Universal Church offers special Friday meetings focused on spiritual and emotional healing.

Take the first step toward freedom—check the back page for a location near you and join us this Friday.

**There is hope. There is healing. And there is a way forward.**



I carried a deep void inside. I felt invisible and helpless, convinced I didn't deserve to be happy. No matter what I did, it felt like I was stuck in that dark cycle, unseen and unheard.

It all started when I was bullied in elementary school, and it continued through high school. From the age of nine, I battled constant suicidal thoughts. I began self-harming and even took some anxiety pills I got from a friend just to cope.

On the outside, I pretended everything was fine, but inside, I was falling apart. By the time I was 16, I was diagnosed with severe depression, anxiety, and stress. The doctors told me I needed antidepressants.

But deep down, I didn't want to rely on medication forever. I was raised in

**It felt like I was stuck in a hopeless and futile loop, like no one really saw me.**

a Christian home and believed that God had the power to set people free from struggles like mine.

Still, when you're deep in depression, it's hard to imagine things getting better. My mind felt clouded, and even though I heard stories of others overcoming depression, I didn't believe it could happen for me.

I kept going to church services and attending youth group activities, but I still felt empty and alone. I



isolated myself, pushing people away, especially my mom. I was angry, sad, and full of self-hate. I didn't think I had any reason to be alive.

Living like that was exhausting. Eventually, I got tired of feeling so low and decided to seek counseling at the church. That's when I learned something life-changing: no matter how I felt about myself, God still loved me. He wanted to live inside me through the Holy Spirit.

That truth hit me hard. I decided to fully commit my life to God—to live for Him and seek the life He promised in His Word.

I started seeking God with all my heart, and He blessed me with His Spirit. I'll never forget the moment God confirmed He was with me and loved me. It wasn't just a feeling—it was a deep, unshakable certainty I'd never had before. For the first time, it felt like I could see the world in color. The darkness inside me was gone.

Now, I'm no longer suicidal. I'm completely free from depression. I have real joy and happiness—the kind that only comes from God. Even when challenges come my way, I know I'm not alone. God is always there, guiding me and encouraging me to be the best version of myself.

—Buhle

**"I used to pretend to be a bubbly, happy person just to cover up the emptiness I really felt inside..."**



**M**y name is Victoria. Before, my life was filled with sadness, fear, and pride. I thought it was normal to have anxiety, but I was too ashamed to talk to anyone about how I really felt. I didn't want people to know I had depression because I was afraid they would see me as weak.

I put on a bubbly, happy front to hide the emptiness inside. The more I tried to convince others of the person I wanted to be, the more I started to believe it myself—I told myself I was strong, resilient, and happy.

But when my dad passed away, I was completely lost in darkness. I thought I could handle it on my own. I bottled up my pain, always trying to appear strong. It was exhausting. Eventually, I lost control and lost sight of who I really was. The cracks started to show, and everything I had been suppressing began to surface. I hit rock bottom.

It was in that lowest moment that I turned to God. I started applying the little I was learning—I meditated, I prayed more, and I made sacrifices. I let go of my toxic lifestyle, the lies, the pride, the grudges, the sadness. I stopped worrying about what people thought of me.

**I didn't want people to know I had depression because I was afraid they would see me as weak.**

When I received the Holy Spirit, I finally had peace and joy. It felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

Today, I can truly say that I am happy. I have an inner peace I never

knew before. Depression and anxiety no longer have a hold on me, and I've overcome the insecurities that used to hold me back.

Above all, my focus is on the Holy Spirit. He gives me the faith to overcome every challenge that comes my way.

— Victoria Levido



**F**or centuries, these seven gates have served as essential entrances to Jerusalem's Old City, holding deep historical and cultural significance. They have played a crucial role in trade, defense, and religious pilgrimages.

Discover the Meaning Behind Jerusalem's Gates Every Sunday at 10 AM, you'll have the opportunity to explore the significance of these gates and learn how to open any doors or barriers in your own life. Don't miss this unique experience at your nearest Universal Church.

"Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter." (Psalm 118:19-20)

The gates through which God's purpose unfolds include: Jaffa Gate, Dung Gate (Garbage Gate), Damascus Gate, Zion Gate, Herod's Gate, Lions' Gate (Stephen's Gate), Golden Gate (Gate of Mercy).

On Sunday, March 9th, 10 bishops will be praying for you directly from Zion Gate in Jerusalem. In the Bible, Zion represents God's presence and His holy dwelling place. It is both a physical location (Jerusalem) and a powerful symbol of God's kingdom, peace, and restoration. Passing through Zion Gate can be seen as a spiritual journey—drawing closer to God, entering His protection, and renewing your faith.

You can be part of this powerful moment. Join us and experience the blessings for yourself!



## UNIVERSAL BEYOND BARS

*You are NOT alone!*



### ANDERSON'S TESTIMONY: "I WAS A LIVING TARGET"

At 14, I started smoking cigarettes with my family. Though it seemed normal, my home was filled with fights, arguments, and betrayals. My father mistreated us, which built up frustration, anger, and deep grudges inside me. To cope, I gravitated toward the wrong crowd—criminals at school and on the streets.

By 16, I was involved in drug trafficking. I became explosive, always looking for fights, driven by the rage I carried. I started using cocaine, but it only got worse when I turned to crack. My family lost hope in me. I was the black sheep, bringing shame while my cousins made their parents proud. The only person who stood by me was my mother—she used her faith to fight for me. But deep down, I had given up on myself.

**Despite my addiction, I wasn't homeless or wandering the streets—I was living in hotels, organizing drug deals, and committing assaults to fund my habits. People feared me. If they saw me on the street, they'd cross to the other side. I was a walking target, constantly in trouble.**

I was someone who was on the "radar," people who saw me always wanted to come after me because I would get involved in any kind of fight, if there was a fight I was there.

One day, high on crack, I committed a terrible assault. As I fled, the police chased me. In desperation, I ran into a Universal Church during an early Sunday service. I bolted down the aisle with the police shouting, "Stop him!" From the altar, the pastor yelled, "Don't shoot him!"

The police caught me, but before they took me away, the pastor looked me in the eyes and said, "Buddy, enough with this lifestyle. Put an end to it today." His words stuck with me.

In prison, I faced the reality of my life. I owed drug money to someone inside, and we clashed. I prayed, "God, if You help me pay this debt, I'll know there's still hope for me." Miraculously, I managed to pay him, but instead of getting pulled back into drugs, I

started attending UBB meetings and reading the Word of God—though at first, my only goal was to get out of prison.

It wasn't until a UBB volunteer spoke to me about the Holy Spirit that I truly began to change. He taught me that to receive the Holy Spirit, I had to let go of the anger and grudges I'd carried for so long.

One night, I dedicated myself fully to God. I prayed, "Lord, if You're the only One who won't reject me, I want to know You."

I remember I had dedicated the whole night to God, I meditated on the Word, and I had my moment to seek, and I said, "Lord, if You are the only One that won't reject me, I would like to know You, Lord."

**That night, in the early hours of the morning, I received the Holy Spirit.**

“

**Everything changed. I forgave my father. I apologized to everyone I had fought with in prison. The rage, hatred, and pain I carried since childhood were gone. I still had two and a half years left in prison, but I was free inside.**



I was so joyful that others thought I loved being in prison. Inmates would say,

"This guy acts like he's in a spa!" But I wasn't the same person—I was full of peace, blessing others, hugging them, and sharing God's love.

Today, I'm free—inside and out. I'm happily married, I run my own business, and I serve God, helping others through the UBB.

My life was completely transformed, and I'm here to tell you—there is hope.



*"I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me! When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord." Psalms 77:1-2*

*Speak out, I am all ears! If you want to be added to my E-Message list, send me a letter with the correct info to: 7075 SW. Fwy. Houston, TX 77074.*

*Include: Name/ID #, Facility, Complete Address, City/State, and the Zip code.*





# Integrity



Every day the UBB has a new episode for you.

There is something for everyone! Do you need guidance about your faith, family, sexual orientation, curses, dealing with loss, addictions etc.?

“¿Hablas español? En la aplicación de Pando puedes encontrar segmentos de la UBB ¡también en español!”



## What is the meaning of integrity?

**Definition:** the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

### Example:

My bunkie came to tell me about a problem that happened in the dayroom and asked if I wanted to get involved. I told them, “No, I don’t need to rack any more time on my sentence. Also, I advise you to do the same.”

A simple example, but how many people lack integrity in something so small? Then you might say, “Oh no, I’m going to be seen as weak. People are going to take me for a joke.” But is that true? Or is it the opposite?

When someone is strong-minded, they aren’t a pushover. It means they won’t cave to what everyone else is doing. Instead, they go against the tide and stand strong for what they know is right.

There’s a special person in the Bible named Job. I’m sure many of you know his story. Here’s a powerful verse:

“The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered and reflected on My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God [with reverence] and abstains from and turns away from evil [because he honors God].” Job 1:8.

Job was a man of integrity. Despite losing everything, he never despised the name of the Lord. Even when his wife told him to curse God and die, Job stood firm. He didn’t allow outside voices to turn him away from God.

Think about it—day in and day out, you face a lot of junk behind those prison walls. Do you want to be someone who, in God’s eyes, lacks character and integrity? I don’t believe so.

Do you want to be a person that before the eyes of God has no character or integrity? I don’t believe so.

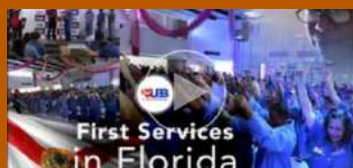


**Work on it, work on yourself, become better, and be a person of integrity, because a person of integrity is a person of respect.**

Just as God was pleased with Job’s integrity, He still looks today for righteous people who honor Him.

These people turn away from evil, seek peace with everyone, and sanctify His Name in their lives, honoring Him in everything.

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## FROM HOMELESS TO BUSINESSMAN



**A**t 16, Silvano got a girl pregnant, and her parents insisted they get married. When he refused, her father became furious and even threatened to kill him. But it was the girl's mother who stopped him, saying something that Silvano would never forget: "Don't kill him. What I have in store for him is worse

than death—he'll become homeless and eat garbage." That curse stuck with him.

Afraid for his life, Silvano fled to another city. He landed his first job at a restaurant, where he worked grueling hours—from 7 AM to 1 AM. Over time, he got promoted to a managerial position,

but things took a turn. "When life started to get better, I got involved with the wrong crowd—drinking, gambling, partying all night. I'd leave work and head straight to the parties. Eventually, my addictions got me fired," he recalled.

**Things spiraled quickly. His drinking and gambling habits left him broke, and soon, Silvano was living on the streets. "I became homeless and started eating from the trash. It was the hardest moment of my life," he said.**

One night, sitting alone on a sidewalk and contemplating ending his life, Silvano remembered the curse that woman had placed on him. It hit him—he had become exactly what she said he would. For years, he had blamed God for his misfortunes, but in that moment, he realized something. "It wasn't God's fault. It was mine. My choices

and my actions got me here," he admitted. The very next day, a pastor from the Universal Church approached him while evangelizing in the area. The pastor invited Silvano into the church and patiently spoke with him, sharing the Word of God. "Right there, I felt something shift. It was like a weight had been lifted off me. For the first time, I saw a way to start over. That pastor gave me the Word of God, and it meant more than any plate of food," Silvano said. Determined to turn his life around, he embraced his faith. He gave up his addictions and everything that had been holding him back. The turning point came when he felt God's presence in his life.

Not long after, Silvano met his wife. Together, they started a small business, selling snacks door-to-door. Eventually, they rented a tiny space to grow the business, which soon expanded, forcing them to move to a bigger location. Today, they own both a pizzeria and a full-service restaurant. Reflecting on his journey, Silvano said, "I used to be a nobody living on the streets. I never imagined I'd have what God has given me. But the most valuable thing I have isn't the business—it's the Holy Spirit." He ends with a powerful thought: "I always say in my prayers—if I have Jesus, I could go back to living on the streets and still be fine. But without Him, I wouldn't want to live in a palace."

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