



Hello. My name is Anthony. I am 51 years old and I am an infant-an infant in Christ. About a year ago I opened my heart to Jesus and have had the happiest year of my life. The more I deepen my relationship with the Lord the better I feel about myself.

Back in 2008 there was a major change in my life. I received a ten-month jail sentence for drinking and driving. It was my fourth. I am thankful to God that I didn't hurt anyone during that time. When I went to jail I was put into a "faith pod" because the rest of the jail was full. Normally you have to make a request to be placed there. I used to call things like that coincidences. Now I call them IBMs (Itty Bitty Miracles).

Pastors would come into the pod two or three times a day and teach the Word of the Lord. At first I was bored with it but then the IBMs started happening. It got to the point where I could not get enough. I started to truly understand that is not about me. It all starts with God. Rick Warren's book *A Purpose-Driven Life* had a major impact on me.

In the past, I had a good business and did well for my family and myself but did not have the happiness and fulfillment that I have today. I thought that I did, but it was not until I opened my heart up to Jesus that I learned how good one can feel about himself and others. Since I completely turned myself over to Him and developed a "Let go and let God" way of living, things are different for me. I own and operate a hot dog stand. I don't make as much as I used to but now I am working for a different treasure. I am happy and I talk with people from all walks of life. Quite often I get the

opportunity to help the needy and enjoy doing it.

If you were to tell me a year ago that I would now enjoy going out my way to help people and give to the needy I would have told you that you were “nuts”. I thank God every day for that change of mindset. Today I consider every day a blessing and an opportunity to do good. I have sometimes wondered why God had not shown me the light earlier in life and have shared this with several mature believers. More than one suggested that God can use my experiences for His purposes. I am hoping that God will give me the opportunity to go back into the jail (this time through the front door) to help other inmates by sharing my experience and hope. Chaplain Frank of the Sarasota County jail use to say “if I could just get one of you”. Maybe I could get one, too.

I remember the time when I first met Don Batterman. He teaches the FIT program and goes into the jail on his own time. I said to myself “this guy is crazy to do this for nothing”. Now I pray to be just like him because I see he is in it for everything , not for nothing. He is doing exactly what he was spiritually gifted to be doing and will be reward in eternity. He is building a fortune in heavenly treasure that cannot rot, mildew, or be stolen. God bless him and everyone who does God’s work and enjoys doing it.



Anthony and Don Batterman

Thank you and God bless you. **Anthony Barbados**

Editor’s Note: Anthony was enrolled in the Financial Success from Scratch and Parenting 101 classes. He claimed that the financial class helped him to realize the importance of taking care of child support, work with business creditors, and clear up back debts. The parenting class motivated him take care of his child support.

Hello sir,

Good morning. I want to tell you that it has been an honor that God has allowed me to be in this (FIT) Dating and Marriage class! I have really found the true meaning of what being a real husband means, what a real man is, what real true love is. I never knew about this because I didn’t have a real mother or father in my life. I have been on my own since I was nine years old and in and out of group homes and jails. But now I know my real father and mother was Jesus Christ. He carried me through the whole time. I have shared everything that I learned in this dating and marriage class with my spiritual mother and it has helped her to find out what true love is also. I told her from the text that true love is a relationship that involves a love commitment by two people. It is not wishful thinking about what is supposed to be or what you want it to be. It is what the relationship is really like, right now. Too many times obvious problems are overlooked in dating or explained away. One partner may plan to “change” the other once they are married or convert him/her then. It is folly to think this will happen. True love will realistically address at least the most important things before marriage and resolve them in a way that is fully communicated and understood.

My mother’s response was “wow, that is so true!” She said “Thank you, Rocheen, for helping me with that”. It had touched her heart and she started to cry. I told her “it’s okay, don’t cry. Consider this a time of joy”. I told her that God put this in her path to be heard this day. I promised her that I would complete this class and carry this message of God to other brothers and sisters. Most of all I would use it with the new wife and family when God my Father will provide one for me. She will be called “My Angel”.

Thanks for letting me share my blessing you . In Jesus’ Name. Amen. Love, **Rocheen E. Rodgers.**

PS. I thank my teacher [Don Batterman] for his love and kindness for coming in and giving us some good news on how God wants true love to be in a true relationship.