

MEET A MEMBER

Chad Miller

I joined the Glenpool Fire Department as a volunteer in August of 1995. My dad and a lot of the guys that I grew up with were on the department, either paid or volunteer. I enjoyed the time that I spent there. I also made one of the most important friendships that would affect my life tremendously in the coming years when I met Captain Ronnie Harris.

In October of 1996 I was hired on full time for the Bixby Fire Department. I was a 22 years old, divorced father of a baby boy and I was living a very rough life. As a small boy I was raised in church. I knew enough to know that the life that I was living was not what I should be doing but I really did not care at that time. I spent the next few years going to the clubs, drinking a lot, and living outside of God's will. Through this time there was the steady and concerned voice of Captain Ronnie Harris telling me that God loved me and that no matter how many worldly things I tried to stuff into my life, I would never fill the void that only God could fill. I did not listen, but luckily he never stopped trying.

In April of 2000 I was hired by the Tulsa Fire Department. I still continued to live the same life that I had been living — drinking and going out. I just made new friends and they were the ones that I went out with. At this point in my life I was really searching for what was missing inside of me. I was wanting to settle down. Although I had made a big jump to a large department and better pay, I was really very depressed and looking for something that would turn my life around. Through this whole time period Ronnie was always there. He would come to my house and talk to me about God. He would invite me to church. He would share his testimony with me and how God had changed his life. He was constantly praying for me. It may not have seemed like it to him, but his words were constantly going through my mind.

And then it happened. In December of 2000 I met the women that would change my life. Kirstien and I had a whirl wind courtship and we were married in May of 2001. When we met and began to discuss what we wanted out of life we both agreed that we wanted to get back into church. I had my son, Dakota. Kirstien had a son from a previous marriage, Brayden. Soon after we married we added our daughter, Sierra, to our family. We started to look for a church and it took a while to really get serious about it. When we did, it was difficult. Kirstien and I were both raised in two totally different churches. They were at total opposite ends of the religious spectrum. But we serve an awesome God. We found our church, Newspring Family Church, in January of 2003. It was an instant fit for us and our children. Kirstien and I both recommitted our lives to the Lord within a month of finding Newsprings. Little did we know that God had big plans for us.

After we joined the church we started going to a "Home Builders" class. "Home Builders" is a small group couple's Bible study by Family Life. As we got involved with "Home Builders" we decided that we wanted to be more involved so we attended a Summit in Tyler Texas. There I met another person that would be important in my life, Chuck Douglas. Chuck is the Family Life Director for Oklahoma. He is also a retired Oklahoma City police officer. And he had just finished a "Home Builders" study for "First Responders"

During this time I had really been praying for a specific area that God would use me in. After reading the rough draft of the "First Responder" book I knew that I had found what God wanted me to do. Kirstien and I joined the Family Life team. We would talk to people about "Home Builders" and help them get their own groups started. I have been very blessed to be able to talk to many couples and guide them to a study that I believe will help them with their marriage whether they are experiencing difficulties or just looking for a way to strengthen a wonderful relationship. I was also trying to get the "First Responder" book out to all the first responders that I could. This brought me back to Ronnie Harris. As I was showing him the book, he was telling me that we should try and have an event for Christian firefighters. God was already working on me to put this kind of an event together. So this, along with many other conversations, as well as many promptings from God, was confirmation to me. At first I was telling God that I could not do it. And he kept reassuring me that I could. So I did some research and I started to plan the First Annual Oklahoma First Responder Family Summit. In August of 2004 we held the Summit at our church. It was a wonderful time and was a blessing to all that came. We did not have a big turn out, but we did build a foundation to grow from. The second summit will be in the fall of this year.

In the spring of 2004 I was talking to a Captain and dear friend of mine John Dyer. I had found a FCF Bible in my fire station and had looked at the information in the front cover. As John and I talked and started to gather information, we thought that it would be good to have a chapter here in Tulsa. Along with six other members, we decided to form the Tulsa Chapter. We found out that there had been a Chapter already in the early 80's. I am proud to say that we now have almost forty members in our chapter.

God has really changed me in the past two plus years. I am a totally different person around the station. I believe that many times the most important witness that we have in the fire stations is the example that we set: The words that others here us say, the things that we do or DO NOT participate in, the attitude that we have with others. All of these things are crucial to how others perceive us. Ephesians 5:4 says, "**Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.**"

This scripture is one that we should adhere to in the station.

We are in a unique position as firefighters to be on the front lines of other people's lives when Satan is attacking them the most. Let me encourage you to do anything that you can for these people. If God leads you' and the situation allows' you to talk to some one about Christ then please do not pass up the opportunity to be a blessing to others. If all you do is just pray silently to God to help the person that you encounter in your work, then who knows you may be the only one that is praying for them. But consider what 2 Chronicles 30:27 says, "**The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayers reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.**" I can testify to you that God will push you out of your comfort zone. It is the only way that we grow as Christians. But if you will be obedient to Him when he prompts you to do something for others, not only will it be a blessing to that person but you will receive a blessing as well.

I would like to end with this, in Mark 16:15 Jesus tells us, "**Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.**" I challenge everyone who reads this article to pick one person that you know that does not have a personal relationship with God and start to share the good news with them. And do not give up after one attempt. It may take years to get through to them. But be persistent. Pray for them everyday. Take every opportunity to talk to them about God's love. Invite them to church. Invite them to church. And one day you will get through. After all, if it were not for such a person like Ronnie Harris, who did not give up on me in five years, there is no telling where I would be right now. God bless you all.