

My Testimony — Larry McClure

If I'm going to tell my story, I have to tell the truth. Not just the good parts. I have to tell where I came from, who I became, and who Jesus is changing me into.

I came from a long line of dysfunction.

My parents were married when my mama was only 15 and my daddy was 19. My dad, and his dad before him, were alcoholics. They spent a lot of their time drinking, gambling, fighting chickens, and fighting people. But as a little boy who didn't know any better, my dad was my hero.

I thought that was what being a man looked like.

My mama came from dysfunction too. Her own mother was mean to her, and she was often put last. But my mama was a godly woman. She tried to keep us in church and hold our family together while working to help provide for us. My dad worked on and off, and when he wasn't working, he was usually drunk or looking for somebody to fight.

He was a fighter in every sense of the word.

And women weren't off limits either. There were other women, there was cheating, there was abuse, and my mama paid the price for questioning any of it. I watched my dad hit my mama, betray her, and make her a prisoner to the life he was creating.

And somewhere along the way, I decided that was what a man was supposed to be.

I followed in my father's footsteps because I didn't know any better. I didn't understand the sin in it. I thought it was just life.

Then there was Tonya.

I first saw her when I was around 10 years old, when our families were neighbors. Then years later, when I was 15, I saw her again.

She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

I knew from that moment that she was the one for me. I didn't understand everything about love back then, but I knew I wanted her.

Her family didn't want us together. Tonya had her own things she was dealing with, and eventually she chose me. She moved into my family's home because she didn't have anywhere else to go.

Four years later, we got married.

That same year, we found out we were going to have our first son.

And that's when the cycle I grew up watching started becoming the cycle I was creating.

Tonya and I fought like we were fighting for our lives. And eventually, I put my hands on her the same way I had watched my dad put his hands on my mama.

At the time, I didn't understand what I was doing.

I didn't understand what I was creating between us.

The abuse continued. So did having children. Within the next seven years, we had three sons.

I thought I was a good husband and a good dad because I was doing what I had watched my father do.

I was wrong.

In 2013, my parents divorced. I was angry with both of them, but especially my mama. I still couldn't see what my dad had done to her all those years. She had finally raised her children and had the opportunity to be free.

Then both of my parents fell into drugs.

And eventually, so did I.

At first, I told myself it was social. I used with friends, and even with my wife a time or two. But sin doesn't usually announce itself when it starts destroying your life.

Then in 2015, Tonya left me.

I was broken, but instead of turning toward God, I turned toward everything that could distract me. Other women. Drugs. My own desires. I walked away from my responsibilities as a husband and father.

I was lost.

Tonya was hurting too. She found comfort in methamphetamine, and I watched the woman I loved slowly slipping away.

We tried to find our way back to each other, but there was so much hurt between us. We had spent years hurting one another, and we didn't know how to stop.

Satan was winning.

I ended up back in jail because of another domestic situation. While I was there, Tonya was wasting away at the hands of methamphetamine.

When I got out, I was angry with her for putting me there.

Then our boys were temporarily placed with her parents, and Tonya entered treatment.

That was August of 2016.

When she got out of treatment, I was there waiting for her with open arms.

But I was still the same man.

I still smoked pot. I still loved hunting and my friends more than I loved being present for my family. I wanted my family, but I wasn't willing to become the man my family actually needed.

In 2018, the anger came back.

So did the abuse.

I ended up back in jail on another domestic charge.

Tonya left me again.

That cycle became normal for us.

Fight.

Hurt.

Separate.

Come back.

Repeat.

For years, destruction and hate were things we taught our boys without even realizing it.

Then came 2022.

Our first grandson was born.

Something changed in Tonya. She desperately wanted a different life. She didn't want our grandson growing up surrounded by the same things our sons had grown up around.

She started going to church. At first, she went without me. I didn't want any part of it.

Honestly, I didn't want Jesus because I didn't want anybody telling me that the way I was living was wrong. I didn't want religion. I didn't want rules. I didn't want to look at my sin.

I wanted to keep being me. Tonya kept going anyway. She kept seeking the Lord. She kept praying. She kept ministering to me and our boys. Her faithfulness was unmatched. And the more she changed, the more I could see something different in her.

There was something in her that I couldn't explain.

It was irritating to me sometimes because my spirit wasn't there yet. Her heart was changing, and mine wasn't ready. She kept pursuing Jesus while I kept pursuing what I wanted.

Eventually, I knew something had to change.

I knew if I wanted to save what was left of our marriage, I had to do something different.

Around the end of May of this year, I started going to church with her.

And then she talked me into doing an eight-week course at church called The Love Dare.

I didn't know it at the time, but God was using that course to start working on my heart.

It wasn't about learning how to make Tonya love me.

It was about learning how God intended me to love her.

It started showing me that if I wanted my marriage to change, I couldn't keep demanding that she change while refusing to change myself.

God started dealing with me. Then our church had a tent revival. Of course, Tonya pulled me into that too.

The first night, I had an encounter with God that I can't explain with words. Something happened inside of me. On July 14th, 2026, under that tent, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. I didn't clean myself up first. I didn't have everything figured out. I simply surrendered.

And Jesus met me there.

Since that night, my life has been blessing upon blessing.

The Lord has filled a place in me that I spent my whole life trying to fill with everything else. And now I just want to pour it out.

I want it to overflow onto my wife. Onto my sons. Onto my family. Onto anybody God puts in my path.

Tonya is everything to me.

And I can't imagine where I would be if she had simply walked away and stopped praying for me. But she didn't. She kept pressing God's love into me even when I didn't deserve it.

She loved me through things she shouldn't have had to endure. And through her, I experienced a glimpse of what the love of Jesus really looks like.

I have truly been brought to my knees.

I'm grateful for her prayers, her patience, and that God gave her the strength to keep believing there was something worth saving in me when I couldn't see it myself.

Today, my daddy is still living the life he chose. He's still lost, still battling addiction, still chasing a bottle, and still rejecting the Lord.

But my mama follows Jesus. She loves the Lord. She has built a beautiful life in His presence. And I realize now that all those prayers she prayed and everything she tried to instill in me all those years ago weren't wasted. She was planting seeds.

I'm grateful for my mama.

She's a godly woman of faith, and I carry what she taught me. I could have become the same man my father became and ultimately would have repeated that same story.

But God had another plan.

He didn't look at me and see a lost cause. He saw a redemption story. And He's still writing it.

Today, August 9th, 2026, I was baptized.

And one of the most incredible moments of my life was getting to assist in baptizing the very woman God used to lead me to Jesus.

My beautiful wife.

The woman I've spent years hurting. The woman I've spent years fighting. The woman who never stopped praying. And now I get to stand beside her as a new creation in Christ. That's something only God could write.

We really can change.

God really does give us new hearts.

We as men, don't have to become our fathers. We don't have to repeat the sins that came before us. We don't have to let our past determine our future.

I am not my father's son in the way I once thought I had to be.

I am the Father's son.

And I will follow Jesus until my last breath.

I don't deserve the grace He's given me. But I'm going to spend the rest of my life being grateful for it.

My name is Larry McClure.

This is my story. But more importantly, this is what Jesus has done with my life.

And He's not finished, yet.