



## Seeing Jesus Work in the Dark Corner of a Sports Bar

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I've lived in Findlay for twenty-five years. I never planned to be in Findlay for more than a few years, but life often takes different paths than the ones we expect. One of the advantages of being in the same place for a long time is the privilege of walking with people for the long journey of life.

### Author

The weekly eNews is provided by CGGC Executive Director Lance Finley



With some folks, that journey may mean frequent connection: every week, every month or a consistent rhythm that lasts through the years. For others, the journey may be more inconsistent, less frequent and with less sense of any discernable rhythm.

I got a text a few weeks ago from an old friend asking if we could get together sometime in the near future. We made arrangements to meet up at one of the local sports bars. I didn't know what to expect from this meeting. It was a little unusual for him to initiate such a meeting. I didn't know if there was some crisis in his life or if I should brace for some sort of direct sales presentation or perhaps he just wanted to hang out with me. I welcomed the opportunity to spend some time with him, but I wasn't sure what I was walking into.

I've known this individual for a couple of decades, all the way back to his teenage years. I've had ongoing but fairly limited interactions over the years. Like any of us, his life has had its own unique challenges and trials. As we caught up on life and what's happened over the years, it became clear that I was talking to someone who had experienced significant transformation since we last visited with one another.

Everything had changed with my friend. From despair to hope. From spiritual disinterest to spiritual hunger. From apathy to passion. From cold and distant to emotionally alive and moving toward health. From darkness to light. From doubt to faith. Even in the midst of a difficult personal crisis, there was something that had changed within my friend and it was remarkable to witness the difference in his expressed desires, attitudes and priorities.

I looked across the table at my young friend, amazed at the transformation in his life. Jesus has done a great work in his life. Jesus has stepped into the middle of his brokenness, selfishness, sin and pain and redeemed him and given him a new identity as a son of the living God. Jesus has transformed his heart and given him a hunger and passion to become the man that God wants him to become. Jesus

has given him a new purpose for living.

Typically, if you see a couple of guys in the dark corner of a bar shedding tears, it's probably not a good thing. On this particular evening, two guys shedding tears in the dark corner of a bar was a very good thing. My friend is a new creation. He is a new man. He is different than he used to be. Jesus is at work in this young man's life and I get to have a front row seat to see the transformation.

As I walked out to my truck that evening and drove home, I gave praise and thanks to God for what He has done and is doing in my young friend's life. I also gave thanks for the blessing of the long journey I've got to walk with my friend. For the past twenty years, God's allowed me the opportunity to stay connected to this young man and play some small part in his own spiritual journey. It wasn't fast, it wasn't planned or methodical, and it certainly wasn't mapped out in a neat, logical manner. It was twenty years of occasional meetings, twenty years of staying in touch, twenty years of a lot of dry times where there wasn't a lot of hope for spiritual fruit. God's persistent grace, love and mercy and His pursuit of my friend have transformed his life in beautiful and astounding ways.

As I drove home I also wondered about the other young men that filled that sports bar that evening. Who is doing the long walk of life with them? Do they have folks who are willing to stay connected for the long haul? Who's willing to meet them in the dark corner of a sports bar to help them make sense of the God who loves them more than they can comprehend? Who is walking alongside them for decades, loving them and pointing them to the Savior who came into this world to change the trajectory of their lives, to change everything?

There are a lot of young men in our world who need some followers of Jesus who are willing to walk the long walk of life with them? Who can you give the next twenty years to in order to partner with God and what He's doing in someone else's long journey to faith in Jesus? Who do you need to call or text this week just to reconnect or check-in?

Don't miss the opportunity to reach out. Don't miss the opportunity to go (instead of waiting for them to come to you). Don't miss the opportunity to patiently love and be present. Don't miss the opportunity to participate in what God's doing in someone else's life and spiritual journey.

Don't miss the opportunity to watch Jesus work in the dark corner of your local sports bar.

Christ's Peace,

**Lance**

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## Church Pews Available

The Zanesville Church of God has some miscellaneous sized church pews they are willing to donate. All have blue padded seats.

(1) 15 ft., (7) 12 ½ ft., (1) 9 ft., (2) 8 ft., (1) pulpit size

Contact Pastor Steve Whetstone, [steve.zcog@gmail.com](mailto:steve.zcog@gmail.com) for more information.

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