

## Excerpt From "Why The Boy Cried, Wolf" | Dr. Stephen Phinney



(Courtesy of Dr. Stephen R. Phinney)

### LIFE & TRADITION

# Man Overcomes Dyslexia, Poor Health, Childhood Trauma to Become a Prolific Writer



*Base Hospital - San Antonio*

The Lord brought me into this world on June 13, 1955. Born in San Antonio, Texas, into a family of three additional siblings; my eldest sister Sheila and my twin brothers, Patrick & Michael. My parents were stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX, at my birth. When I entered this world, I was plagued with allergies to the point of being allergic to all forms of milk/foods, human touch, textures, and even the air itself. It is why I was placed in a "bubble" (oxygen tent) off and on for the first five years of my life. My first memories were seeing condensation on the inside of my "bubble" and, as told by my mother, holding me through latex gloves attached to the walls of this tent. As I began to grow through the nurturing of soy milk, I have vivid memories of what seems to be endless prodding & probing of doctors and nurses. The remaining memories I have of this time were closely related to seeing open festering

wounds on my entire body, which I get to this very day. After being an infant, this “bubble” became the home in which we lived. Due to the ramifications of starting life with such profound weaknesses, I have countless memories of rejection. From my perspective, growing up, I was born rejected by life itself.



*Wethersfield, England*  
Stock Photo

In 1957 we moved from Texas to Wethersfield, England, where I learned to speak – with a British accent, I might add, speaking that accent until I was 13 years of age. While in England, I developed fond memories of the sounds of fighter jets that I treasure to this day. My parents were popular socialites, hosting parties for friends and military acquaintances. Our home was filled with live music, alcohol, and drunken laughter. Most of my memories of England are positive, even associating the parties as being fun and exciting.

In 1960 my father was transferred to Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, Kansas. It was during this time that I began to have rejective experiences I would rather forget. On one of my “good” days, meaning being able to go outside, I have one particular memory. My brothers and I climbed on top of a factory roof, with them instructing me to go to the other side and look over the edge, which I did, turned around, and no brothers to be found. I ran back to the ladder to discover they had taken it down and took off. I remember crying out for help until someone came to take me from the roof. There was another time when my brothers and I came up with this plan to rob a candy truck. With brothers inside keeping the store attendant busy, I rampaged the candy truck and got caught. I remember crying and telling the truck driver that our family was poor and without food; with that, he gave me several bags of candy and told me to scurry.

Probably the most hurtful memory I have of Topeka was being rejected by a teacher while in Kindergarten. I remember being checked in, sitting at the little table, and the teacher came and had me removed from the class, saying I was not ready for school. A humiliating moment for sure. It was this moment that started my rejection pattern connected with education.



*Richland, Kansas*  
Stock Photo

I am not sure why my father decided to move us out of that community, but we soon found ourselves living in Richland, Ks (now under Clinton Lake). In Richland, I have memories of being in Kindergarten, but with this memory comes a trauma that has stayed with me. I remember walking to school one day, and the next thing I knew, I was drawn into the woods to discover a teenager or adult there in the woods. I'm not sure what happened to me in the woods that day since the trauma forced me into a blackout. The next memory I have is walking home alone. This event troubled my soul for years – not being able to file it away in my mind. I asked my brothers if they remembered this event but to no avail. They had no memories of such an event – a memory I had to put in the hands of my Savior.

My father was soon transferred to Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, Maine. My memories of Bangor are mixed but mostly disturbing. I recall living in two homes, one being in base housing and the other being in a house on a hill. The first home comes with my first memories of my father being out of control when he got drunk. This outburst resulted in MP's at our home to calm my father down. Since I had never seen my dad act in such a way, I was perplexed about what was going on. This evening started a long habit of my father having these post-traumatic war episodes after becoming intoxicated.

Children have unique ways of acting out trauma, and one of the ways I attempted to deal with what I saw was by becoming bound by fear – I am talking about unfounded fears, which others learned to take advantage of.

One night my mother was off babysitting in the neighborhood, in which time some neighbor kids made a dummy, stuck a knife in its chest, poured catchup around the knife, and placed it in the field across the road. Then they came to me and said they found a "dead man" in the field – at which time we all went to see this body. When I saw the "bloody" mess, I took off into the community screaming for help, a reaction I don't think they expected. As I was running through the community calling out, the boys quickly took the dummy and hid it. Once the MP's were called, mother now present, no "body" was to be found. The evening's conclusion was my parents had a child that "**cried wolf**" – the syndrome begins. I was disciplined by my father, which I can assure you was not pleasant, and life went on.

### **I Killed My Best-Friend**

Another time that marked my life in Bangor was when I played with my best friend next door. The house across the street was the home of another friend. We were playing "store" in his garage. I sent my best friend over to his house to get some "eggs." With the driveways being steep, off he goes on his trike down one drive into his drive. Both his mother and I saw at the same time a car coming toward him. I ran out into the street to stop this horrific event, but by the time I got to this friend, the car ran over him and "popped" his head right in front of me. With my friend's blood all over me, I sat there in the street holding one of his tennis shoes – in a state of shock. The grief I saw unfold with his father and mother has marked my mind to this day. I recall a fireman picking me up off the street and putting me on the side of the road to sit on the curb. While sitting there, I can remember vividly saying to myself – *I killed my best friend*. I still believe I was responsible for his death, but the Lord used this experience to teach me many life lessons throughout the years.

When I was a teenager in art class, I painted a single tennis shoe – that won awards. My art teacher asked me what "inspired" me to do such a unique picture. With that, I told her the story and wept as she used the picture to help me resolve the grief and guilt. Before my art teacher passed, she told me this was one of her favorite moments in teaching. Her family has this painting as a part of her teaching memorabilia.

### **MY SCHOOL YEARS**

Another significant memory was living in "the house on the hill." As I mentioned before, my father and mother were known for hosting parties extravagant in liquor, food, and music. It was no wonder why most of us kids ended up with "addictions." During these times, I vividly remember the adults eating steak with all the trimmings while we kids were left with eating from the guests' plates once they were inebriated. We appeared to be a moderately affluent military family for those looking from the outside, but the truth being said, we were living "hand to mouth." My folks spent most of their funds holding up an external image, but once you got beyond this facade, it was "crackers and catchup." One of our family jokes has been - my father was known for going out for a loaf of bread and coming back with a satellite dish. External image building became another of my nasty habits as an adult.

Probably one of the most hurtful experiences living in Bangor was being passed from one grade to another and being put back into the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on the first day of school. I speak more of this experience in this book, but it was a horrific moment in my life that left its mark on my already established inferiority complex. Keeping in mind that I did not learn how to read and write until shortly after meeting my wife.

My father retired from the military while at Dow Air Force Base, and this motivated my dad to move back to Kansas - Michigan Valley, although my father's retirement did not come without a hitch. After 21 years of military service, my father was stripped of most of his rank – one of the worst things that could happen to a war vet who fought for his country and had earned some of the highest military citations. My mother told me that he got into a heated discussion with a superior officer who happened to be African American, who also was drunk at the NCO Club. That "heated discussion" turned into a fistfight, which resulted in my father assaulting him. You see, my father grew up in a Quaker/Friends church that believed that "black" people were the cursed generation and were not to be accepted by church members. Growing up, I have tons of memories of my father having a conflict with African American people, but the bitterness he expressed toward this race was horrid. After being demoted, my father would refuse to be served by an African American. I believe this false teaching affected him in his adult years and certainly became one of the factors in being stripped of most of his military rank that he had earned over the 21 years. It is no wonder why he was bitter at the government. He remained bitter until his 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary when he was represented with his military honors by representatives of the Army and Air Force.

After moving to Michigan Valley, my father settled into a career in electronics, which he maintained most of his post-military years.

My life in Kansas also comes with mixed emotions. Still being in and out of this protective "bubble" due to my intense allergies, now 11 years of age, I decided that I was breaking out of this homebound prison. After announcing to my mother that I would not succumb to these allergies any longer, she said, *"You are likely to die if you expose yourself to the things you are highly allergic."* Letting her words go in one ear and out the other, I began to do all those things that my allergies blocked me from doing and began playing freely. It was not long before I began to react to my environment and became quite sick. My mother got a neighbor to rush me to the hospital

for an injection that would restart my frail body, and within a few short moments of the shot, my world turned black – my heart stopped. I have vivid memories of being in one of the ceiling corners with a sensation of being pulled into a dark tunnel while watching the doctor push on my chest and a nurse comforting my mother. The next thing I knew, I was staring at the face of the doctor. I had thought this to be a dream most of my life until I brought it up on my parent's 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. My mother looked at me with this dead stare and then told me it was not a dream. She said I was certifiably dead, and the doctor brought me back. Well, after this death experience, you would think that I would have gone right back into that bubble-prison, but I did not. I told my mother that *"I would rather have a short life out there than to have a longer life in here."* An allergist years later told me that self-proclaimed decision probably was the best decision I had ever made. Forcing myself to adjust to the outside world caused my immune system to increase.



*Appanoose School, Kansas*  
Photo | Phinney Family

It was after this experience that I started to attend school more regularly. It was a little late, though, for I did not know how to read or write. I maintained that weakness until my wife taught me years later. This lifetime weakness caused me to "fake it until I make it."

One of several memories I have of those school years was when I was in fourth grade at Appanoose country school (Michigan Valley, KS). Due to my allergies, I had a perpetual diarrhea problem, which I have to this day. When I had to go, I needed to go immediately. I raised my hand to be dismissed, and the teacher told me to wait until school was out. I raised my hand again, and finally, it happened – an explosion of odor filled the air. With that, I could see that the teacher was horrified, and she dismissed me. I went to the locker room to clean myself up to the best I could. Hurried back to get on the bus. After settling into a seat on the bus, all the kids packed into the back of the bus – dishing out names and rejection the entire trip home. The driver smelling the obvious reason, left the situation as is. Then one young lady got up, came to the front of the bus, and sat with me. It happened to be the same young lady that smelled like urine each morning when she boarded the bus. We ended up saving seats for each other for the remainder of the year.

I wish I could say that the humiliation ended there, but it didn't. My siblings continued to harass me when I got home, and returning to school the next day was the worst yet. It took me years to bounce back from that one. I don't speak of it much today, but I continue to have these adjustments to food and the environment, sometimes with odor accidents, but I have learned to accept this weakness as a God-sized opportunity of Grace.

## **I Saw Jesus**



*A Replica of Steve's Vision*

The rejection I experienced during this period of my life left me with an overwhelming sense of despair. Such despair that the Lord showed Himself in a mighty way. While still at Appanoose School, I was on my way to the ball-diamond during recess one spring day when I sensed something in the sky. I looked up and saw a man dressed in a brilliant white robe, chest high, with His arms opened wide – with His face washed out from the light. I grabbed ahold of my friend (Brad) and asked him if he sees the man. He said no, and off to the field, we went to play ball. Throughout recess, I continued to look to the sky to see if this figure returned.

Keep in mind that I had no idea who Jesus was. After the school bell rang and we were heading back to class, I sensed it again. I looked up and saw Him again, this time from the knees up with a smile on His face. I stopped and asked Brad if he could see the image this time, and he said no. That day I remember looking out the classroom window expecting to see Him – but to no avail. Just a few years ago, I looked up this old friend to ask him a question. After a bit of a reunion, it had been 40+ years; I asked him if he remembered that day. To my surprise, he did and went on to tell me that God used that event to lead him to Christ once he became an adult. I was simply blown away. Not only did I nail down that it authentically happened, my dearest friend, at the time, found Christ because of it.

That event was used by God hundreds of times through the years to show me that He has always had His hand upon me. On the day of my salvation, 16 years of age, the Spirit reminded me of this experience to reassure me of His sovereign plan and that I was a part of it. So you see, Michigan Valley may have been a tough season in my life, but it also was a time when God introduced Himself to me to set me up for my salvation years later - that my dear reader is GRACE.

Most of my elementary years were filled with “faking it.” One of the great mysteries in my life was how each school I attended didn't acknowledge my illiteracy. Instead, they passed me from grade to grade, knowing I couldn't read or write.



## **THE LOWS OF Jr. HIGH SCHOOL**

After a few years, dad became restless again – it must have been those military years. He packed up his family, now six children, and moved to Linn Grove, Iowa, a territory pioneered & established by our relatives. We all pretty much guest this was the final stop, dad's home.

Linn Grove is where I spent my junior high and high school years. During junior high, I was greeted with a new level of rejection. My junior high teacher pressured me to perform school work that didn't exist in me. As I jumped from school to school, and believe me, there were plenty of them, not one school communicated with another as to my inability to read or write. This lack of communication resulted in me feeling like a failure in every school I attended. By this time, extreme fears and phobias had developed in my soul. As this new teacher applied pressure, I

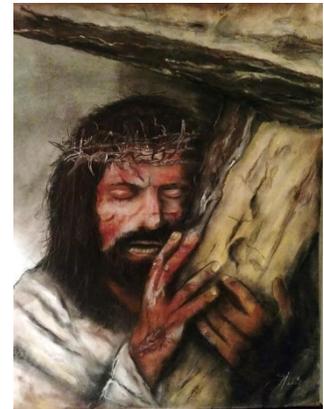
pulled deeper and deeper into my little "bubble" and began to detach from humans in general. Her way of dealing with this was putting me in front of the class and using public embarrassment to motivate me. The results were obvious; I withdrew all the more.

One particular time was during a classroom public spelling-bee. When it came to my turn, she announced the word I was to spell, and great laughter broke out due to me not knowing the first letter to spell the word. She verbally gave me word-after-word to spell with failure upon each request. Once the class shouted out *Steve is a dummy, Steve is a dummy* – she allowed me to sit down. My response to this was drawing her pictures, which was the only thing I did well. I figured that this might be a way to please her and gain her favor and acceptance.



Several years ago, I was asked to submit a story to be published in an alumni book. After much prayer, I decided to do this. I told my story openly and honestly. Keep in mind, this teacher was in her 90's at the time, reads my entry, and writes me a letter of reconciliation – seeking my forgiveness. With that letter were all of the pictures that I drew for her during those traumatic times – all carefully marked and dated. This was one of the more healing times of my life. Six weeks later, she died.

Even though Jr. High was traumatic; I continued my drawings and pastel work. Since drawing was the only way I could express myself as I was growing up, I have maintained this expression to this day. Today, I am blessed with handcrafting pastels for many people throughout the United States and Canada. The online Inphinnity Art Gallery shares these treasures with the world. View [HERE](#)



## THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

By the time I got to high school, I was fearful beyond words could describe. My twin brothers and eldest sister were seniors. Rejection continued by my classmates, but this time, I had my siblings to protect me. I was accepted into a few senior activities regularly, a "no-no" in this school. There was a sophomore, who we will call "Mr. G," who took it upon himself to make my life miserable – keep in mind that each time he did, my brothers would often come to my defense. Little did I realize at the time that my siblings would be graduating that year, and I would have to fend for myself once they were gone. That is exactly what happened. The next year I was stuffed and locked in lockers, beat up more times than I can remember, and teased relentlessly. One experience stands out above the rest – one afternoon, I looked out the study hall window and watched the football team attempt to put my car on its roof. I went and got the principal, and to that, he said *boys will be boys*.

Another moment that is hard to forget is on a particular Saturday night; I went cruising with my buddies (fellow rock band members) in "Mr. G's town." Sure enough, he and a couple of his cronies began following us as usual. I told my friend to stop the car, let me get out, take the beating so that we could enjoy the remainder of the evening. We stopped, I got out, and yes, Mr. G (drunk) began beating me. This time I immediately sensed it was different. He beat me so

adversely that his friends told him to stop because he was killing me. My mother taught me a principle regarding *facing your enemy, take the beating, turn the other cheek, ask them if they are done, and never walk away from a fight*. On this evening, as in all the previous beatings, I did exactly that, but this time he had beat me so severely that I had become temporally blind & delusional. With major open wounds, covered in blood, I searched for him in my blindness; following his abusive voice, I found him and asked him if he was finished. With that, he hit me one more time, his buddies pulled him off me, and off they went. Today I bear a golf ball size tumor (scar tissue) in my ribcage, reminding me of this evening.

The next morning, I told my mother what happened. She was quick in her response, "*this is why I call you 'my little Joseph.'*"

After Mr. G graduates, my senior year was almost rejection-free. After I graduated and found a job, I get a knock at my apartment door on a Sunday morning. I open the door and guess who was standing there? That's right, Mr. G and his best friend. Thinking this was the day he was going to finish me off, I did the right thing and invited him in. He asked me *where I got such strength to face me fight after fight and have the gall to ask if I was finished*. I told him he wouldn't believe me even if I told him. He demanded that I tell him, so I did. I told him that I had a born-again experience when I was 16 years of age, and I learned through those who taught the Bible that born-again Christians are required to *turn the other cheek* and attempt to turn our *enemies into friends*. His reply? Well, it shocked me a bit – he said *you are more of a man than I will ever be*. He then took me to lunch and told me I was welcome in "his town" anytime. Since I had a hard time believing him, I did exactly that. The next weekend I drove over to "his town," walked into the bar that his family-owned, and ordered a drink. The entire bar began harassing me in a manner I had become quite accustomed to. Mr. G got up on a chair and announced loudly *if anyone ever lays a hand on Steve in the future, they will have me to deal with*. I still, to this day, am amazed, this happened. That was the last day I have memories of being harassed by my school peers.

Not long ago, one of Mr. G's friends told me that Mr. G gave his life to Christ shortly after that Sunday's reconciliation. Today Mr. G is known in his community as a Christian leader. I am a bit emotional in saying this, but if all those beatings were for his salvation – then every ounce of pain & suffering was worth it!

## **YOUR SON IS RETARDED**

After being passed around by many schools throughout my childhood, by the time I reached high school, I was labeled *borderline mentally retarded*. During my junior year, my literature teacher discovered I didn't know how to read, which baffled her to no end. Me too. Both of us wondering how I could get through 11-years of school and not know how to read? Being curious, she did a speed-reading test on me via a film strip reading projector, which at the time I thought was a joke. She started at a speed most elementary children could read - with a test of comprehension afterward. Retention was next to zero. She speeds the machine to the level of speed readers & my comprehension ranged increase to 80%. Even though she didn't pin-point dyslexia, she found a profound truth. My brain processes data faster than the given norm of traditional readers. And

when I was forced to process data in a "normal" range, my mind would experience "word blindness."

During my junior year, the school counselor called for a meeting with my mother and me. During this meeting, he announced that I should never pursue higher education. You would have to know my mother, but that did not sit well with her – AT ALL! She pretty much demanded the reasons for such a statement. He told us that I was "borderline retarded" and had the test results to prove it. Even though my mother and I walked away from this meeting, blowing off his recommendation, he continued to set a chain of events in motion to stop me from graduating. On the night of graduation (almost a year later), I was standing with my classmates, in cap & gown, to get our senior picture taken when this counselor pulls me out of the group and tells me I am not graduating. The principal standing close by watching this trauma unfold steps up, pulls him aside, and orders him to put me back in the group. I think I was the first "mentally retarded" person to graduate from this school.

Several years later, in a community miles away from my hometown, I held a position as Director of a handicapped residential care home. To my amazement, who was assigned to work for me as my cottage nurse, this counselor's wife – a registered nurse. She was a wonderful worker and person. I got along with her tremendously well. Not long after her employment with us, this counselor (her husband) seeks me out and reconciles with me. This man ended up being the photographer who took our engagement photos for my wife and me. This was yet another moment of healing for me.

I am convinced that nothing happens to us that God cannot turn into a ministry moment of healing. I cannot say that I have observed God doing this with all painful relationships, particularly family members, but I have seen enough to believe.

*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28)*

Oddly enough, today, I am a prolific writer, and my email publications go out to well over 2.1 million inboxes each year. With that said, out of 22 high school classmates, 16 of them are subscribers to my writings. That means the very source of my rejection during those traumatic years is reading the most powerful message known to the Christian world, that of the indwelling Life of Jesus Christ. Few things could please me more.

## **SEX, DRUGS & ROCK'N ROLL**

After graduating in 1974, I was blessed with a nearby community job at a Tractor Supply store. I worked hard and became a faithful worker. The family that owned this chain adopted me into their family. I learned many things about family, business, and product supply. Even though I worked at a factory throughout my high school years, this job taught me something different – the importance of hard work and family loyalty. While working this job, my private life was starting



to get out of control. It was almost like I had two sides to me – one being a faithful worker who displayed a high level of responsibility and the second being my private flesh-life. Due to my childhood, drugs, sex, and rock-n-roll poured in and out of my life due to my childhood's unresolved conflicts.

While in high school, I was a part of a rock band that earned a healthy degree of popularity in our state. We enjoyed our local fame, but with this popularity came temptations of drinking, drugs, and sex. Coming from such a rejective (not wanted) background, having women readily available during or after concerts, I became “addicted” to the attention that came with this lifestyle. The years I spent being a part of this band introduced me to a world that my flesh simply could not handle. This fake and deceptive world was carried over into my young adult years. While trying to be responsible in my work world, my “off-time” hours turned into one flesh-party after another, living out a “wannabe” celebrity dream.

During the '70s, “streaking” (running around naked) became a fad. I took streaking to a new level by bringing it to the stage and integrated it into my act. To my surprise, it was a hit, but I didn't count the cost. This led to the underworld of a mafia-run strip circuit. I went from “having fun” to getting caught up as an entertainer in the underworld. I became the first male strippers in a local club. It all started with me convincing the local club owner to allow me to get on stage and do a strip routine with a featured Vegas showgirl, which was the “unpardonable sin” in this industry. Promising him an increase of business, he took the dare, tried it, and as the Devil would have it, it became this owner's most popular show. This one show led me down a path that I have suffered extreme regret. Here I was a “Christian” and living a lifestyle of debauchery.

One night after a show, my dance partner, now girlfriend, told me her “boss” (pimp) was here from Kansas City “to deal with me.” I won't go into details, but the Lord ended my “career” in the entertainment industry that night. God used this horrific night in the back alley of that club to spank me – plain and simple.

I lost my job at the local Tractor Supply store. My reputation didn't match the family values of this respectable chain. Now unemployed and wandering in the wilderness, I found myself engaged to a wealthy Catholic girl. After enjoying the privileges of her wealth, I was faced with the reality of my demise. On the day her wedding dress arrived, I bolted like a thief in the night – supposedly devastating her life. Her brothers began hunting me down like a dog. With that, I left the state.

Upon returning from my “trip,” my mother encouraged me to apply for a job that my aunt set up for me. Being desperate for employment, I went to the interview. I speak more about this job later in the book, but the job ended up being a Federal position of directing a county for the underprivileged, OEO: Office of Equal Opportunity. To my surprise, I got the job, and as suspected, I integrated my drug world into this position – using this job to traffic drugs. After about a year of holding this position, I got caught. Being told I would never work for the Federal government again, they sent me off without charges.



Grandma Corrie  
Stock Photo

Being unemployed again, disillusioned by life, my mother invites me to a local movie sponsored by Billy Graham – *The Hiding Place*, *The Corrie Ten Boom Story*. Determined not to go, my mother begged me, announcing my father was going with her. With that news, I wanted to see this with my own eyes. Upon arriving at the theater (early), I was attacked spiritually to the point of pacing like a wild animal in front of the theater. One of the attendants came out and asked me if I was “OK.” Moments away from going back to my apartment, my father and mother come around the corner. After our typical detached greetings, we go into the theater, sit down, the whole time continuing to be under this attack. The movie starts to capture my complete attention, and peace filled my soul. After the movie was over, I expected someone to stand up and do an altar call. But no, everyone got up and left. I asked my parents if they wanted to come over to my apartment for coffee, but my father was quick to say he wanted to go home. I went back to my apartment alone, and sure enough, the attack came on me in full force. I went into the closet in my bedroom and grabbed my grandfather's preaching Bible, an inheritance from him, and threw it against the wall in anger. It bounced off the wall and landed opened-faced on my bed to the book of Proverbs. With what little knowledge I had to read, God miraculously opened my illiterate mind. While lacking in understanding most of the words, I got the message, which brought me to brokenness.

*For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things; from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil; whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways; to deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words; that leaves the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; for her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead; none who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life. (Proverbs 2:10-19)*

I got up from my knees, still sobbing uncontrollably, and flushed all my drugs down the toilet. I determined to never return to this lifestyle again – and I didn't. I will forever be grateful for Corrie, whom I call my *spiritual-grandmother!* She not only was like the grandmother I never knew – God used her life & story to set mine free.

Within a week of this surrender, I joined my father on one of his cross-country trucking trips. This trip was during the week of the historically famous “trucking strike.” While in the Bronx in New York City, we were shot at. The bullet pierced the cab and missed my head by inches. This “wake-up call” re-settled and confirmed my new lease on life. When we got back home, a letter was waiting for me – a letter from a young lady named my wife. In this letter, she invited me to apply for a job at a handicap care facility in Sheldon, Iowa. Needing a job and change of life, I applied for this position, and honestly, surprised I got the job.

In meeting my beloved wife, now of 40+ years, God began to build me as a writer and educator. By this point in my journey, I was functionally-illiterate. Meaning, I self-learned the basics of

reading and writing. And I mean the basics. As she was teaching me to read, she made use of my strongest trait – pictures. Her method was basic but effective. Each word I did not understand or my dyslexia would inflict, she had me look up the word and draw a picture to associate it with a picture. It was this method that sent me off into a world that amazes me to this day.

Years later, during my studies for my Master’s degree, I learned a valuable fact. People think in pictures – not words. Even though my wife didn’t understand her method’s science at the time, her answer to my demise was beyond relevant. The human brain develops words through pictures that influence the mind. Later, as I began to study the organic Hebrew language, which is the first known written language for humanity, I discovered God Himself communicated with His people through pictographs – pictures. It was through this revelation that I merged my childhood rejection patterns with the Living God. My relentless efforts in communicating with people through pictures became my greatest asset.

Today I am known for writing. As odd as that is. I’m told my writing style creates word-pictures for readers. I am also a producer of sorts, producing videos and graphics that communicate complex Truths. I say this to note a very important fact. God can use all things for the good. What humanity means for rejection, God uses for our good.

Well, nowadays, most call me “Dr. Phinney.” After chuckling inside, I am reminded that God can use man’s weaknesses to reveal His indwelling strength in Christ.

*“And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

This autobiography, ***“Why The Boy Cried, Wolf,”*** will walk you through not only my life story, but it contains twelve powerful lessons on *Not I, but Christ*.