

## On Which Side of the Statistic Will You Be?

Revelation 12:11

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Thirty-five years ago today, two weeks before my 21st birthday, I said I do to my high school sweetheart. Too young, too immature, too proud to ask for help, it was a marriage that was destined to end in divorce.

Fourteen point nine out of every 1,000 new marriages end in divorce, according to 2020 statistics. At the time we were married in 1986, the divorce rate was about 50%. The top 3 final straws that doom a marriage are infidelity, domestic violence, and substance abuse. As hard as it is for some to believe because of the competitive bodybuilding lifestyle I was living, I was never unfaithful. Although I never physically struck or laid hands on my wife, domestic violence can come in other forms.

I abused about every substance under the sun. During a typical 24-hour day, 20 hours of my day were spent under the influence of some kind of mind-altering substance. It most certainly was not a very pretty picture, and as much as I wanted it to change, and as many times as I tried, I couldn't pull myself out of the death spiral.

On a cold November day, I donned the best Gold's Gym sweatshirt I had and the nicest pair of workout pants I owned, and walked into an Apostolic church. I repented of my sins, was baptized in the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved and was filled with the Holy Ghost as I spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance.

The next week my wife went with me to church and our lives were never the same. We were no longer going to be a statistic of failure; we were on the other side of the statistics now; we were a statistic of success, and it was only by the grace and mercy of our blessed Savior.

However, of the 50% of marriages that do not end in divorce, how many of those marriages are actually “happy” marriages? How many marriages in our churches are actually “happy”? With the help of God, we can say that we are “happily” married. It took a commitment to not only God, but to each other and working on having a happy marriage to actually having a happy marriage. I am so very thankful to the Lord for His help.

Matthew 7:13-14

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

I was reading something the other day that said that for the first time in over 100 years, over 50% of our nation said that they were not regular church attenders. I am thankful I am not a part of the statistics that side with the ungodly. However, how many of those that say they “attend” church are actually attending the right church?

I am so thankful that I have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered to me. I refuse to be a negative statistic. There is increasing, insurmountable pressure from outside forces to change. We have to resist that pressure.

We recently had an elderly couple visit our church; someone in the church overheard the gentleman say, “Many years ago, I attended this church and left. Coming back today, the church is still the same, and the power of God is still the same.” We need to resist change.

Hebrews 4:12

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I was reading yet another article that said that only 6% of Americans held a biblical worldview, according to longtime pollster George Barna. I am thankful that I am not only a part of the minority that has a biblical worldview, but am a part of an even smaller minority that holds an Apostolic worldview.

Tonight, my wife and I are going to go to Jocko’s Steakhouse to celebrate 35 years of marriage and to celebrate the goodness of our great God that has helped us to have a very happy marriage and to celebrate being in and staying in the truth. If it had not been for Jesus, where would I be? The songwriter asked. We both know where our family would be today, on the wrong side of the statistics. Thank you, Jesus!

R.P.S.