

"MY Story"

To tell you my story, I need to first introduce you to my father's story.



This is the oldest family photo of my family tree on the Wells side of the family. It was taken in Forestburg, Texas, between 1897 and 1899, in front of the family home.

My father's grandmother and my great grandmother Nancy Elizabeth Mabry Wells is the one seated in this picture. She was born in 1844 so she was in her 50's in this picture. She died in 1914 at the age of 70.

My great grandfather John Anderson Wells is not in this picture because he passed away in 1897.

My Dad's father and my grandfather, Samuel Andrew Wells is on the far right. My Dad's father was born on August 5, 1873, in Montague County, Texas, so he was about 24 in this picture.



My Dad's father and my grandfather, Samuel Andrew Wells, married my grandmother Mary Anna "Mammie" Hill in 1899. They had 8 children. When they first married, my grandfather was a farmer in Bowie, Texas.

In 1907, after the birth of their 4th child in Texas, my grandfather moved the family via covered wagon to Jordan Quay County New Mexico where he filed claim on some land where he became a successful farmer and also delivered mail. They lived in a half dug out when they first moved to New Mexico. Their next 4 children were born in New Mexico. Two of their 8 children died before their first birthday.



My father was named Wilbur Jessie Wells. He was born in New Mexico in 1911. He was number 6 of 8.

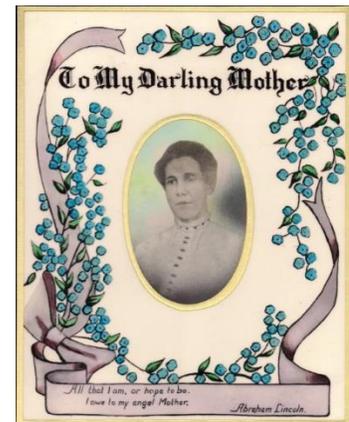


This is the oldest picture I have of my father. He is in the buggy with his younger sister Audrey. It was taken about 1917. That is my grandfather Wells and grandmother Wells standing next to the buggy.

My Dad's mom and my grandmother passed away in 1919. She was 44. My father was only 8 years old.



This is a picture of my Dad, Wilbur Wells, working on the farm in 1928 when he was 17 years old.



My Dad left New Mexico after graduating from high school and moved to Avenal, California. He became a Real Estate Agent.



This is the best pictures I have of my Mom and Dad after they married. My mom's maiden name was Opal Barnett. She was from Oklahoma.

Like my Dad, she also moved to California after high school. My Dad met my Mom in California and they married in 1938. He was 27 and she was 23. My brother Jim was born in California a little over a year later.

My grandfather retired and left New Mexico and moved to California. He died in

California on December 21, 1939. My grandfather died 15 years and one day before I was born.

After World War II began, Dad got a job at Tinker Air Force Base and he moved the family to Oklahoma City around 1940. After moving to OKC, my sister Saundra was born in 1945. I was born nine years later in 1954.



This picture was taken about 1956. We were the typical happy carefree American family. My Dad worked at Tinker for the government. My mom was a homemaker. We lived in a 3-bedroom house that my dad built on the corner of N.E. 16th and Missouri. We attended Kelham Baptist Church which was just a few blocks from where we lived.

My Dad and Mom did not regularly attend church when they first moved to OKC. They enjoyed dancing and drinking and being at a good party. They would attend a local bar to dance and enjoy a few drinks. One night a fellow asked my mother to dance. My dad took it personally and insulted the fellow. An exchange of insults followed before they stepped outside and a fight started.

My mom swore after that she would never go back to the bar scene again and she started attending church at Kelham Baptist Church. My Dad started going to church with her and they both received Christ and were baptized at Kelham.

My mom was 39 when I was born. My parents did not think that they could have any more children. When my mom found out she was pregnant, she was afraid to tell my Dad. So she wrote him a letter and put it in his lunch pail. He was eating lunch with some co-workers that day when he saw the letter. He read the letter and it did not register with him what my mom was trying to tell him. His co-workers had to explain it to him and he went into shock.

Our family was a typical happy carefree American family until 1957. In 1957 my mother was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. My sister says it was like a shadow came over our house and it never left. She said we were never typical or carefree again after that.

Mom died at the old Mercy Hospital on Nov. 26, 1958. I was 3 years old. She was 43 years old.



The last time I saw my mom was just before her death. I was taken to the hospital to see her one final time. She was very weak and she had accepted her time was short. She prayed over me and dedicated me to God and His care. A short time later, she passed away.



- Dad was a strong man who valued hard work. He embodied the opposite of entitlement. He thought you should work hard and earn everything you received. He was raised working on a farm. He was captain of his high school basketball team. He moved away from home when he was 17 years old and worked at the high school as the janitor until he graduated high school.

He set out for California on his own to make a life for himself and He did. He worked at Tinker for 28 and ½ years until he retired.

- Dad was an intelligent and organized man. He should have been an engineer. He wanted his home clean and organized and his garage was incredible. Every tool had its place. Everything he stored had its place. His yard and flower beds were immaculate. He built his first two homes. He maintained and fixed his own cars. He built his own outdoor grill areas.
- Dad was a frugal man. My siblings would say he was cheap. He did not borrow money except on his house. He saved money and had emergency funds. He looked for the best buy. He was content with everything except his job. He always felt like he should be doing something that he enjoyed more and that would provide better for his family.
- Dad was a fun man. He was active with his family and with friends. He enjoyed jokes. He enjoyed camping and fishing. He enjoyed playing dominoes and cards. He enjoyed playing sports and watching sports.
- Dad was a stable man. He did not let difficult circumstances get to him or control him unless he got angry on occasion and said a few expletives followed by an apology to anyone that heard.

- Dad was a good provider, a good protector, and based on what he knew, he was a good leader.

When mom died Dad became a broken man. He deeply loved my mom. She meant the world to him. He stayed in bed for days. His severe grief disabled him. He could not imagine life without her. He could not imagine every being happy again without her. His life and our home felt so empty to him. He wanted to die with her.

But he had an 18-year-old son, a 13-year-old daughter, and a 3-year-old son. So he pulled himself together and started his new life without her.

After Mom died, there were more changes in our family. My brother Jim got married about a month after Mom's death. In June of 1958 we left the home my Dad had built for us and moved to another house on the Northwest side of OKC.

The first six months after mom died, Dad focused his attention on his work, keeping up our house, and on my sister and I. Dad still took us to church.

I loved my sister Sandra and she loved me. She took good care of me physically and emotionally and was like a mom to me. She made sure I felt loved and accepted and I knew she was proud of me. We were as happy as a small unhappy family could be.

About 8 months after my Mom's death, Dad started going out to clubs. He started dating. He also started drinking again. For many years he would only drink on Friday night or Saturday night when he went out to a club.

But when Dad started drinking again, it was the beginning of a self-inflicted family tragedy. Dad would eventually remarry when I was 6. But the cloud over our family would only get darker and darker with time.

“Alcohol is a drug. It affects brain chemistry by altering levels of neurotransmitters. **Neurotransmitters** are chemical messengers that transmit the signals throughout the body that control thought processes, behavior, and emotion.

Neurotransmitters are either **excitatory**, meaning that they stimulate brain electrical activity, or **inhibitory**, meaning that they decrease brain electrical activity. Alcohol increases the effects of the inhibitory neurotransmitter **GABA** in the brain.

GABA causes the sluggish movements and slurred speech that often occur in alcoholics. At the same time, alcohol inhibits the excitatory neurotransmitter **glutamate**. Suppressing this stimulant results in a similar type of physiological slowdown.

In addition to increasing the GABA and decreasing the glutamate in the brain, alcohol increases the amount of the chemical **dopamine** in the brain's reward center, which creates the feeling of pleasure that occurs when someone takes a drink.”

Alcohol slows down your brain activity so that you are not as conscious of your problems. It causes you to relax. It also increases the chemical that creates the emotion we experience when we win. Sounds great doesn't it?

The problem is that in excess it is addictive, it destroys thought processes or sound reasoning, it inhibits our moral consciousness, and it creates a false perception of reality.

Science has also proven that families with certain genes have a greater predisposition to becoming addicts. My family apparently has that gene in both sides of our family tree. Both my Dad and Mom had siblings that were addicts.

It did not happen suddenly but after my mom's death, over a period of a few years my dad became a substance abuser and an alcoholic; an addict.

As a substance abuser an addict becomes abusive to himself and to others. They abuse most the people that they should care about the most.

My Dad's addiction grew progressively worse for over twelve years. His abuse of himself and others increased as his abuse progressed.

A substance abuser and an addict descends into a bottomless pit and if you are their spouse or their child, you descend with them. It is a living hell!

1. When your father is an addict, you live with fear.

What causes that fear?

- You live in fear because an addict is unpredictable and abusive.**

There is the sober person and there is the drunk person. You live with fear from day to day because you never know how you and others will be treated by the addict. You live with fear because you never know what you are going to find when you walk through your front door or what the addict is going to be like when they walk through your front door.

The first time I remember being afraid of Dad's unpredictable behavior was when I was 6. It was Christmas Eve, my Dad had been drinking and wanted to drive the car. My older brother would not let him and there was an intense argument.

The next time I remember being afraid of Dad's unpredictable behavior was right before the next Christmas when I was 7. Apparently I was told not to go into the garage because there were Christmas presents in the garage. I was curious so I sneaked out into the garage to see what I was getting for Christmas. I was thrilled to discover I was getting a new bike. But my Dad had been drinking and when he discovered that I had disobeyed him, he took the belt to me and sent me to my room. I still recall looking out my bedroom window that night and crying as Dad moved my new bike across the street to a neighbor's house. It is the first time I remember being really bitter and angry at my Dad.

The next time I remember being afraid of Dad's unpredictable behavior was the next Christmas Eve was when I was 8. Dad had been drinking and he got very angry at my step-mom. He stripped the cloths off of her and threw her out the front door of our house.

Not long after this happened my step mom divorced Dad. Dad was devastated and went on a binge. Dad ended up in a mental and substance abuse ward of a local hospital. I stayed with my older brother and his wife.

From that point forward there was a growing fear in me of what Dad was going to be like and how was he going to treat me.

- [You live in fear because an addict is dangerous to himself.](#)

My sister left for college when I was 8 and it was not long until she got married. When you are 8 years old, your mother is dead, and you are the only child at home, you live in fear of who is going to take care of you if something bad happens to your Dad.

- [You live with fear because you want to avoid any triggers that might cause the abuser to abuse you.](#)

You find yourself walking on egg shells and not being genuine in order to avoid those triggers.

2. [When your father is an addict, you live with shame.](#)

What causes shame?

- [You live with shame because an addict's behavior will embarrass you.](#)

Divorce was not that common when I was growing up. None of my friends parents had been divorced. By the time I was 15 Dad had been divorced 3 times.

Dad would have too much to drink and attend public events at church or school with me.

When I was 15 Dad lost his license for drinking and driving.

On more than once occasion Dad blacked out while he was driving and did not remember how he ended up where he was or what he had done the day before.

When I was 15 Dad tried to break into the home of my 3rd step mom. He was arrested for public drunkenness and he called me from the jail in Cordell, Ok. I drove to Cordell that night to bail him out of jail. Two of my friends went with me. You live with shame because an addict's behavior will embarrass you.

- [You live with shame because you feel guilty for the addict's problem.](#) You feel guilty because you blame yourself. You feel guilty because an addict will shame you to try and make you feel like they are the victim.

- [You live with shame because the addict will degrade your character.](#)

When I was 12 Dad found out I wanted to live with someone else because of his addiction. He locked me out of the house to punish me for wanting to leave him. He then told me how

bad of a son I was for wanting to leave him. He threatened me that if I ever told anyone I wanted to leave again, it would only get worse for me.

When I was 16 my dad tried to shame me by telling me that he knew that I had been more immoral than he was with women.

3. When your father is an addict, you live with feelings of loneliness and abandonment.

What causes feelings of loneliness and abandonment?

When your father is an addict, your life can be devoid of long term relationships outside of your family.

When I was in elementary school, in a seven-year period I lived in 6 different homes and I attended 5 different elementary schools. I had three step moms over a period of 9 years. In each case the day my step moms left was the last day that I ever saw them.

There was no one to talk to about my Dad's problem. When your father is an addict you can feel like no one knows, no one understands, and no one cares.

When I was 12 Dad would go out on Friday nights and not come home till Sunday. This went on for about the next five years. I was at home by myself a lot of those weekends unless I had a friend over or went over to a friend's house.

When your father is an addict, you live with feelings loneliness and abandonment.

By the time I was 15, I was bitter at Dad and hated him.

I also hated God. I blamed God for what happened to my mom and I blamed Dad for what happened after my mom died. I would visit my mom's grave at the cemetery and grieve over what my life had become and what my life could have been like if my mother was alive. I told God that I did not need Him and I told myself that I did not need anyone else. I was in a dangerous mental and emotional state.

An addict descends into a bottomless pit and if you are their spouse or their child, you descend with them. It is a living hell!

Unless you know Jesus.

When I was 16 years old, I thought I had fallen in love and I thought the girl I loved had fallen in love with me. But we were both way too young and immature to understand genuine love. The day she broke up with me she told me something that shocked me. She told me that I was evil.

This shocked me. I considered Dad to be evil. It shocked me that someone could think and feel about me the way that I felt about dad.

I did not understand then that the Spirit of God was answering the prayers of my mother. Through the words of a girl I thought I loved, God was showing me why I needed Him.

At first it was just words that went over and over in my mind. "You are evil." I knew I was a sinner and I was not perfect. But I began to seriously consider what does it mean to be evil?

To be evil means that you will intentionally injure other people to satisfy your personal desires. To be evil means you are selfish. Psychology would call it being a narcissist.

At some point I concluded she was right. I was evil. I could see it. I could see me.

I wanted people to have a good opinion of me so I did things that would create that perception but in my heart I was evil.

When I discovered and acknowledged that I was evil, it scared the hell out of me. One of my first thoughts was I am just like Dad. And if I was just like Dad I was going to be in this pit of hell I was in for the rest of my life. No one would be able to stand me and stay with me just like no one could stand or stay with Dad.

I also felt helpless and powerless to change the motives of my heart. I saw my evil motives as who I was and I felt powerless to change who I was. I could see my life was unmanageable because of who I was. I was evil and because I was evil I would do evil things to people.

I knew I could not change who I was so I began to slowly open the door to the possibility that I needed God to change me.

Over the next six months I began to go back to church and really listen to what the preacher was saying about God and Jesus. I began to read the bible to try and understand more about what I was hearing.

Then on December 31, 1971, I decided to attend a worship service at the church I had been attending. It was called their New Year's Eve Communion service.

The service started at 11pm and was to end at midnight. No one spoke in this service. I received some instructions when I walked in the door and one of those instructions was no one was to talk. There was either silence or there was instrumental music. The instructions included how to prepare yourself for the Lord's Supper which would be taken at midnight. Part of the preparation was what the Lord's Supper represented and how to know if you were a Christian. So the instructions included the gospel message of Jesus Christ.(Share the gospel).

The instructions included the promise that if I would receive Jesus, He would forgive my sins, give me a new heart, and I would go to heaven when I died. There was also the promise that if I would receive Jesus, He would never leave me or forsake me. This was a great promise to someone who lived in fear of being alone and abandoned.

To receive Jesus, the instructions said that I had to repent of my sin and trust Jesus to be my savior from sin. The instructions said that to trust Jesus meant to surrender to Jesus; to follow Him.

On December 31, 1975, I received Jesus as my savior from sin because I saw I needed a new heart and He promised He would never leave me or forsake me. I went to the front of the church and trusted Jesus to save me.

There was an instant change in my heart toward my Dad. I began to have empathy and compassion for him. But I was still struggling with my old feelings about him. I would still rehearse his faults in my mind and that would stir up those old bitter feelings. About six months after I was saved I shared my struggle with some friends at our church. They simply told me that I had not forgiven Dad the way the Lord had forgiven me and they showed me in the Word that God wanted me to forgive him. They then prayed with me about it. After we prayed, I forgave Dad.

After I forgave Dad, I felt like the Lord had told me to tell Dad that I had forgiven him and that I would love him no matter what he did. I also felt that the Lord told me to apologize to my Dad. I knew I had not loved my Dad like God loved me. I decided to tell my dad that I had not loved him like I should have as his son and ask him to forgive me.

The next morning, I met with my Dad in our living room and did what the Lord told me to do.

Dad did not immediately say anything in response to me. But something changed in him.

From that moment to the day he died five and one half years later I never saw him take another drink.

Our relationship changed. We began to have some open conversations about things that he was uncomfortable talking about.

Dad started going to church with me. My senior year in high school was a good one for Dad and me. For graduation he made me an album and wrote me this letter.

My Dad and I got out of that pit. And this why these verses became my life verse.



Ps 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the Lord;

And He inclined to me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay;

And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.

3 And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;

Many will see and fear,

And will trust in the Lord.

NASB

What God did for me through Jesus, He wants to do for you. He loves substance abusers and addicts. He loves evil people. He wants to do a miracle in your life and raise you up out of your pit.

But you must see the wickedness of your heart and your need for Him. Then you must trust in Jesus to save you from sin and give you a new heart.

Invitation

Will you receive Jesus Christ as your personal savior from sin?

Will you forgive the abuser or addict in your life or anyone else that you are harboring a grudge against? With God's help will you love them no matter what they do?