

My name is Ben, I am 24 years old. I was born and raised in the foothills of North Carolina in a small town called Lenoir. Growing up I lived the stereotypical, normal childhood. Whether it was running wild around the house or dominating in various sports, I was a very active child. My younger brother and sister were also active in sports. Our family was always at some practice or game cheering one another on. We were blessed to not only have what we needed but also what we wanted from our parents. Everything was picture perfect for my family until 2010 when my dad began to feel the weight of the economy crashing. It was during this already difficult time that our family began to go through another devastation. A divorce. Suddenly, the picture wasn't so perfect anymore. I needed an escape, and golf was there to offer one. At least four hours of peace on a golf course was exactly what I needed. I found a form of therapy; I found a happy place. My senior year something changed. I smoked marijuana for the first time. I found a new happy place; one I could take anywhere with me. One I could escape in all the time.

It didn't take long for marijuana to not be enough anymore. I began to try things like alcohol, cocaine, LSD and (what would soon become the center of my world) prescription pain medication. It was ok at first, it was only on the weekends. It was just something to pass the time. I can't remember the specific time that my new habit turned from recreation to absolute necessity. I began to drown and numb pain, loneliness, depression, and anxiety that I had refused to acknowledge for years. I was ready to implode, and I couldn't even remember why. As the pain grew stronger so did my need to numb it. This is when my addiction took another devastating turn. I stole, lied, and manipulated the family that I loved and grew up supporting. Thank God for the courage of my friends and family who showed me tough love. At 22 years old I found myself in my first rehab where I spent 6 months. I learned so much about the Lord and I began my journey with Him while I was there. I decided I was ready to leave rehab, I had new knowledge and a new relationship with God. I was set! I could do this. It wasn't long before God was on the back burner, and I was living in relapse. I caused destruction and calamity in my family again. By the grace of God, I found BCRC.

Today, I am a senior resident and leader at BCRC. I am an understudy and leading the kitchen program, a place I thought I would never find myself enjoying. I am continuing to build a solid foundation with Jesus Christ leading and directing my every step. I feel that I am called to help others find the Lord and climb out of the same depravities I have. I often share a quote that I live by, "Make your dash count!" There are two dates on your headstone. The date you were born and the date you died. Those are not nearly as important as the "dash" in the middle. That "dash" represents the journey. It represents your testimony. My dash has disappointments, pain, sadness, depression, and anxiety. Those are not the things my testimony speaks to. My "dash" also has victory, resilience, love, support, and God! It is all about the testimony you share, where the devil tripped you up or how God pulled you out. I choose to glorify my victories and the victories already promised to me. So, I am here at BCRC trusting in God to help me change my life. Through God, I can make my "dash" count. I give all the glory to God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life has gone, a new life has begun!"