

My life description

Ruud Phaf: from rebel, smoker, to Christ

I would like to tell, how God has redeemed me of my addiction. Let me start with my youth. As a boy of 10 years old I was already started smoking. I wanted to belong with all those larger guys. Smoking was tough. Many people smoked in that time, you saw no different and knew also not better. My parents were smokers also, so they were my example. The stench of cigarettes was very normal at our home. You understand my parents never knew that I was smoking, because otherwise, certainly. ...



Although I had become pretty queasy at the first cigarette, I was maintaining. I had to smoke, I had to learn to smoke without getting sick. I did not smoke much because I didn't had much money to buy cigarettes. I begged regularly with older boys from my neighborhood for a cigarette. By doing small chores with people, I spared my money to pay tobacco. What do you mean addicted?? Yes, at a young age I was already addicted to smoking. I smoked really everything. I could hide it for my parents for a few years. The smell of cigarettes already sat at their noses from themselves so they never smelled it on me.

Well, the years passed and as we were accustomed at home, it was time to move again. We moved from downtown of Utrecht, to a small town, Hoograven. So we moved to street at the front of a church, The Immanuel Church. I will tell more about this shortly.

I was about 14 years old when I became friends with Rob. When he was 13 years. His home was on the Oudegeinlaan in Utrecht, which was near me. We became really good friends from each other. And mind you that we did like smoking along with other friends. Rob told me about the church meetings where he and his mother were going at Sunday. But I didn't had the idea to come with them to the meetings. Rob knew Jesus and I already went to the Church sometimes. That was surely enough, so I thought. The Immanuel Church was formerly a Reformed Church and I went there on Sunday just to please my parents.

I went to church, I tried to understand the preaching but it remained far away from me. I sat there with my friends regularly to play cards or carving beautiful marks at the seat. I didn't had a true relationship with God. It was not that I hated Him, but I didn't knew Him like my Savior en Redeemer. That became later.

Smoking was for me not that sinful en bad. I did not had the experience, that it was not good for me.

To come back on my friend Rob, he continued to do his best to take me with him to a Friday night meeting at the church. To be released from all the asking all the time I went with him to the meeting at the church.

There, I had a special experience. I thought that the people who were there are drunk of tacked some pills or something because these people had that joy on their faces. That was not customized at the church I went on Sunday. I was accustomed to sit tight at the seat, and to have a pious face even though you meant nothing of it. For me was 1 hour sitting at a church seat a true attrition.

The church meeting on that Friday night lasted 2 hours. But the word I heard there, I had never heard in my life before. It had interested me very much. The preacher was a man in an ordinary suit, knowing as brother Grootveld sr. (he is already with the Lord for a few years). I liked the preaching and the way he was talking but that was it to me.

My friend Rob, was very persistent, because he asked me over and over again to go to the church with him once again. Well he was right that emerged later.

The moment came that God really came into my heart en by the grace of God I became a child of Him. At first a church visitor, now a child of the most high living God. What an experience that was! God had changed my life. He had forgiven all my sins. But there was still something not changed in my new life with the Lord, namely the smoking. Quickly before and after the meeting I smoked a cigarette. Yes, I was addicted, although I thought that I wasn't. I smoked 7 years after I had give my life to Jesus.

Why?! Yes, why! My friend and I smoked both, but we knew that this could not go further this way. We did really our best to get rid of it. The first two weeks went well, but at the third week it went wrong. I believed really that God would helped me, but for me it became a decent struggle.

Time and time again I tried to get rid of it and I prayed really to God for help. God saw my struggle and He came to rescue me. I really wanted to be a clean temple of the Holy Spirit. I really longed to serve God. Within me there was a spiritual battle. Satan wanted that I would keep smoking, but God is still stronger. God allowed something in my life so I would be released from the smoking.

I was 25 years old when my lung collapsed the first time, this had nothing to do with smoking, but God used this situation, to releases me from my addiction. I had a lot of pain bud God healed my longs very quickly. Why did God not released me earlier when I became a child of God? This would you may be wondering. Well I don't know. What I do know is that

the ways of our Lord are unintelligible. The Lord has a road mapped out for every human, to walk with Him, as we would only give our lives to Him.

God had cured me of my smoking addiction and a collapsed lung. Later, I would have 6 more, I will tell you more about it later.

Not long afterwards the Lord filled me with his Spirit. Glory to him! The smoking stood God in the way to fill me with the Holy Spirit all the time. The problem was myself, I could not go to Him and say "Lord why don't you do it?" Prayer alone is not enough. We must also take action.

There are things in our lives, where we need the help of God. That's good, but sometimes the Lord not answers our prayers as we would like. I needed God's help and I tried to stop with everything in me, but not in my own strength. So in my weakness, He came to help me. Isn't that great, that we have a strong Mighty God when we are weak. He is strong, Hallelujah!

God was busy with my life, He had delivered me and my friend from the addiction. He also get filled with the Holy Spirit and he's now be used by the Lord to do great things. There was been struggle in this area of our lives. There will be many fights to fought, I am not afraid of, because the Lord is present in everything. He is the Victory, glory!

God totally set me free but some nights, while I slept, the Devil came and let me smoked in my dreams. This happened three nights. At my work there was someone who smoked the same cigarettes I had smoked. Sometimes he came to stand very near me, just to let me smoke again. But none of that happened. Jesus released me and I was free! And the devil had to let go of me. Praise God!

If you recognized these struggles and longs to serve God, in what kind of situation you're in with, God has the answer. Do no longer see on the circumstances, acknowledge that you are weak from yourself and come out of the situation together with God. Just completely trust Him, that He will help you. The fight can be stubborn sometimes, but hold on to Him, never let Him lose. God is for us and not against us. He will take care of us. We have a powerful weapon, the blood of Jesus. Satan is overcome! Why is the blood of Jesus so powerful? Because Jesus Christ lives!

Amen.