

Up in Smoke

Written by admin

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by Jennifer Hamner



At a Christian service club meeting when I was thirteen, I tried smoking cigarettes for the first time. It was at night and the counselors had us all in a big room watching a movie. A friend tapped my shoulder and motioned for me to go outside. We snuck out and stood behind the building smoking her dad's crumpled up pack of Pall Malls. They were horrible but I kept smoking them. It wasn't long after that night that I was smoking on a regular basis. By the time I was fourteen, I was smoking a pack a day. Back then cigarettes were cheap and I had discovered which convenience stores would sell them to minors.

I smoked heavily until I was twenty four. If my calculations are right, I had smoked approximately 80,000 cigarettes during those ten years. As a new wife, I suggested to my husband that we try to quit, especially me since I wanted to have a baby. With the goal and the desire of having a baby, I put them down. A month after she was born, I started again and smoked a pack a day for the next nine years. By now, at age thirty five, I had inhaled almost 170,000 cigarettes or more. I felt bad every time I'd light one up around my daughter so I decided to quit again. This time was harder. I spent unknown but large amounts of money on nicotine laced gum, inhalers, and patches. There was even a time I had plastered patches all along my body and was still smoking. I felt sick with all that nicotine and poison going through me.

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Plopping down on the bed one January day I cried. I peeled off the patches and threw them on the floor. My daughter walked in and sat next to me.

"Mommy, what's wrong?" She asked as she put her small hand on my knee. I glanced down at her long fingers and hoped they would never hold a cigarette.

"Oh, I've been trying to stop smoking and nothing seems to work." I told her.

She looked at me with those giant blue eyes, already full of wisdom, and said, "Why don't you just pray about it? Promise God you won't do it anymore."

She seemed so sure of herself that this plan would work. I sat there and pondered it for a brief moment and figured it was the only thing left to do. I got on my knees next to the bed with torn and stinky patches lying at my feet. My daughter got on her knees next to me. We bowed our heads and out loud I prayed.

"Dear Lord, I have tried on my own to stop smoking and can't, so please help me. Take this desire from me so that I will never want another." I pleaded my case before God.

"Don't forget Mommy to promise, too." My daughter reminded me.

"Oh, and Dear Lord, I promise not to ever smoke another cigarette again. Amen." I finished up and hugged my daughter.

As we were cleaning up my mess with the broom and dustpan, she looked at me and said, "You know if you break a promise to God, a bus could hit you."

Her simple statement was important because I had made a promise to God. I needed to stick to it. I needed to be true to my word. God helped me be true to my word also because he did just what I asked of Him; He took the desire away. I have been smoke free now for over five years and feel great. I tell anyone that wants to quit that there is no need to waste money on gimmicks or to just give in to the habit because they feel like a failure. Take it to God. He will and can take it away from you. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Jennifer Hamner lives with her two daughters in Northport, AL. She teaches Sunday School and VBS at Rosedale Baptist Church. Although she works a full time job outside the home, her passions are using her writing and painting talents to tell others about God.

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