

## **The day when everything changed.**

I have been wanting to share this story publicly for a long time, but haven't until now. Now with everything happening in our world, this is as good a time as any.

I was 25 years old. I had just finished my four year apprenticeship for Cabinet making. After working for a few local Cabinet shops I thought it was time to venture off on my own and start my own Cabinet shop. I could be my own boss, and set my own hours so I could spend more time with my real passion. Racing and riding my Dirt bike.

Around the same time I started my entrepreneurial journey, I was also on a spiritual journey. Some friends of mine had invited me to Church, and for the first time in my life I was spiritually curious enough to occasionally attend Church and the odd Bible study.

It was November 1994. I was working late in my shop and it was time to go home. Part of my lock up routine was to clean the shop which included taking out the wood cuttings to the large industrial garbage bin outside. As I took out the garbage I had this habit of kicking the bracket off of the pin that held the garbage lid open. However this time I kicked the bracket, I missed it completely and hit the steel forklift bracket below. I wasn't wearing steel toed shoes.

I never felt pain like I did that day. I'm sure everyone heard my screams groans and choice words for at least a 6 block radius.

I hopped back into the shop and slowly took off my shoe and rather bloody sock. I was shocked to see that the toenail on my big toe was completely torn from my toe and bent flat against the top knuckle of my toe. Word's fail to describe the pain I was in.

I shared the shop with my co-worker Tim. Tim grabbed the first aid kit and we wrapped up my toe with some gauze. My first thoughts after seeing my toe was to go to my parents place and have my Mom' who was a registered nurse, cut what remained of my mangled toenail off. Now I had a good 6 months of pain and suffering to endure as I waited for my toe nail to slowly grow back. I felt like such a fool to kick the garbage can. It was my own fault. I felt that I deserved this pain for doing such a foolish thing.

After finally getting my shoe back on my bandaged foot, I attempted to drive home. However it was very difficult to drive a standard transmission with only one foot. Then about half way home I remembered that it was Wednesday night. Wednesday was Bible study night with my friends. My friend who was hosting the discussion group lived about half way between my shop and my parents. The pain was so bad at this point that I thought that just maybe one of my friends could give me a ride home because I couldn't drive any further.

I stopped by the house and quietly let myself in. I timed it just right, as they were just wrapping up their discussion as they were praying for one another. Prayer was still a mystery to me, so I just watched at a distance, waiting to ask for a ride home.

At this point the pain from my injury was overwhelming me. It took all I had left to muster up a silent prayer, "Ok God, I can't handle this anymore, Can you do something about the pain in my toe?"

At that very moment, I felt a small heat source ignite as if someone had lit a match just outside the window that I was sitting beside. Then almost immediately, that heat source came through the closed window and came up under my toe as if someone was holding a candle under it. My toe became intensely hot, to the point that the heat over took the pain. My toe felt like it was on fire! Just as I was about to cry out in pain, I felt the heat source go out the same way it came in.

Suddenly the fire was gone and so was the pain. I have no other words to describe it. That incredibly intense pain that I was experiencing one second ago was gone. I was absolutely stunned. I quickly got up, slipped my shoe back on and drove the rest of the way to my parents house.

When I arrived home, I removed my shoe, and hopped into the living room of the house. I really didn't know what had just happened. All I knew was that I did not want to bump my toe and have that intense pain come back again.

As I hopped into the living room I saw my Dad was lying on the couch with his leg in a cast. He had just gotten home from the Hospital as he slipped and fell in the driveway the day before and tore the ligament in his leg. The doctor just reattached his ligament and he was now in recovery.

My Dad saw me hopping on one foot, and noticed the blood all over my sock. I explained that I had kicked the garbage can at work and ripped my toenail off. He grimaced and said "Ouch, that's too bad, I would rather have this kind of pain (pointing to his casted leg) than that."

I then cautiously told him about my simple prayer, the intense heat and how I had no more pain. I was very cautious as I really didn't know what happened, I also knew that my Dad was very skeptical when it came to God and spiritual matters. Skeptical to the point of being somewhat hostile about the topic at times.

As I explained that I thought that I just came from a Bible study and thought that maybe God might have healed it, my Dad scoffed at the idea. "Oh come on, You don't believe your God healed your toe do you?"

'I really don't know Dad?' I replied... "Let's have a look." I nervously removed my sock and blood soaked gauze bandage. And there was my toe, completely back to normal. The only evidence of trauma was the blood on my sock and the blood soaked bandage. There was also a speck of dried blood under the tip of my toe nail.

We were both speechless. My tough, skeptical Dad actually started to cry.

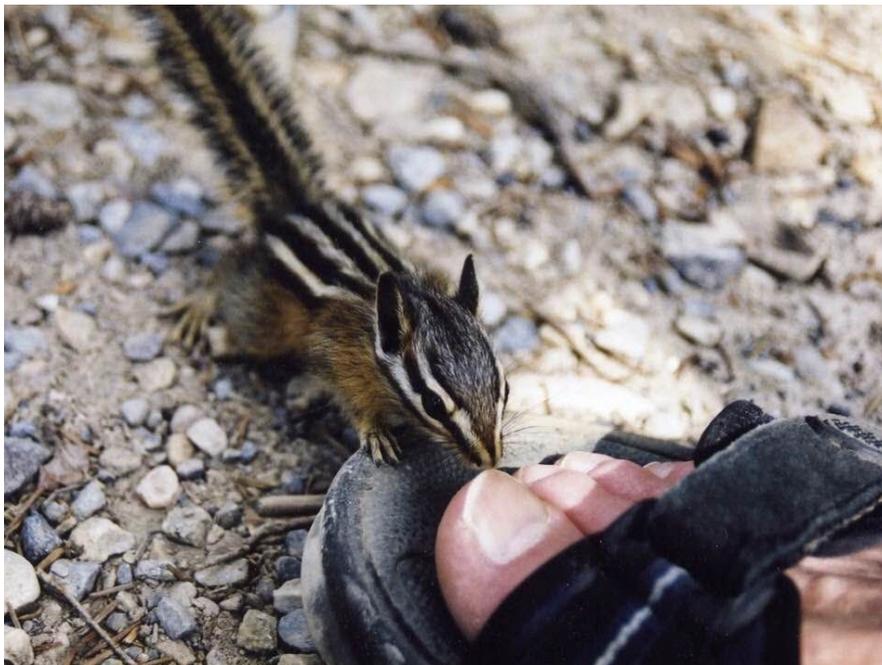
We had an amazing conversation that night. A conversation that has continued to this day.

Even with no pain, it took me a few hours to gather the courage to actually touch my toe. Once I finally did I was surprised to discover it felt like new flesh under my toenail. It did not have the tough feeling that you feel when you touch the tip of your toe or finger. It felt like new flesh. I could push and pry on my toe. No pain whatsoever.

I showed my co-worker Tim my toe the next day. He was absolutely stunned, and said he would not have believed it if he hadn't seen it himself.

I do believe that God answered my prayer. I was the simplest prayer I could muster up. Yet for whatever the reason, he heard it and answered it. The healing of my toe completely changed my perspective of God and prayer. My request was more of a desperate whimper than a prayer. It was really all I could muster up as I was beside myself in pain. Yey God not only heard it, he answered it, almost instantly.

This has taught me that God not only hears our prayers, he is more than capable of answering them. I have prayed many prayers since that time. Many of those requests have seemed just as urgent such as prayers for healing for my Mom who was dying from Cancer, prayers for healing for my baby boy who had Trisomy 13, a serious chromosome deficiency and died prematurely. Many of these prayers seem to have gone unanswered, yet for some reason God healed my toe. I don't know why, but I'm grateful.



This is an amazing picture of a Chipmunk who was obsessed with my toe during a hike in Banff National Park in July 2004. The Chipmunk bravely approached me 4 or 5 times. It was clearly only interested in my big toe. I don't know why. Even though this was a few years after it was healed, it's a fun reminder of God's power and grace.



