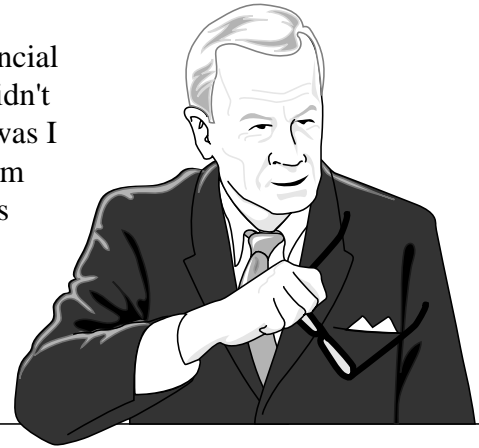


## I Don't Even Know His Name\*

By Don Kimbro

I was beginning to feel a sense of panic as I looked over the financial report for my ailing business. It was much worse than I thought. I didn't see how we could possibly make it. What was I going to do? How was I going to tell my employees, especially those who had been with me from the beginning? What would I do to make a living? The business was all I knew!

My business wasn't the only thing going sour in my life. I had recently moved out of our house and getting a divorce was the hot topic with my wife of 18 years. Although we said we still loved each other and there was no one else involved — we just couldn't seem to live together. Our marriage was a constant fight. Our drinking didn't help either.



Our oldest daughter, who was only 16, apparently had enough of the both of us. She ran away from home with a boy friend of four months. Two months earlier my dad had suffered a massive stroke. I made it to his bedside just in time to watch him die. He was helpless —and so was I. I didn't even know how to pray for him.

Now my business was failing. What was happening to my life? Everything I had worked so hard for was falling apart — my marriage, my family, my business. Was there anything else that could go wrong? Was this all there was to a life of hard work — a life of sadness, disappointment and failure? Suicide crossed my mind but I knew I was too chicken for something like that. I needed help. But from where? From whom?

The knock on my office door startled me.

"Yes," I shouted out, "What do you want?"

My secretary, sensing the irritation in my voice, slowly opened the door and said, "There's a gentlemen here to see you. He said he's a local businessman and just wanted to stop by to say hello. Here's his card."

"I bet he's here to try and sell me something," I muttered to myself as I glanced at his card. "This is the last thing I need right now — a sales pitch to buy something I'll probably never be able to pay for, much less sell."

"What's he look like," I asked her.

"Well, he's nicely dressed, in his mid-fifties and has a very pleasant manner about him. He said he would just take a few minutes."

"All right, but that's all he'll get — a few minutes. I'll be right out."

"Hello," he said, as he extended his hand in a warm and firm handshake. He was a pleasant looking fellow — nice suit, conservative tie — maybe he really was a businessman. He certainly looked happy.

He introduced himself as the owner of a consulting firm — one I'd never heard of. "I'm calling on local businessmen in the area to share something that has brought about a truly remarkable transformation in my life and my business. Even though you don't know me, I think you'll be interested in hearing what it is. I promise I'll be brief."

"Here it comes," I thought to myself. "He's going to try and convince me that I need his services. Boy, is he going to be disappointed."

"O.K. I'm all ears, but I really am busy. Could you make it short?"

"Certainly," he gently responded. "I want to talk to you about Jesus Christ and how knowing him can change your life."

"You've got to be kidding," I interrupted, "I'm in the biggest crisis of my life and you want to talk to me about religion? I don't want to be rude but —"

"I understand, but if you'll just let me explain. What I have to share may be just what you need to hear. You just said you're facing the biggest problem of your life. I believe that God can help."

"No, you don't understand," I retorted, "If there is a God, why hasn't he helped me before now? This isn't the first time I've been in serious trouble."

"Maybe he has," my visitor smiled, "and maybe he wants to again — right now!"

Before I could respond, he reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a little booklet called, *Steps to Peace With God*. In the next few minutes he explained how much God loved me and how he had a purpose and a plan and for my life. My sin and my unwillingness to change was keeping me from that plan. He told me what I needed was a new life, one brought about by having a relationship with God, through faith in his son Jesus Christ. He explained how Jesus had died for my sins and that God was ready to forgive me, if I would repent and accept his son as my Lord and Savior.

"God will totally redirect your life," he concluded, "if you'll let him. That's what he did for me and I haven't been the same since — and neither will you. You can change the course of your whole future right now if that's your desire. You can start by admitting that you're a sinner and that you need help. Then tell Jesus that you are sorry for your sins. Thank him for dying on the cross for you. Ask him to come into your life — and he will. You can become what the Bible calls 'born again.' Would you like to do that right now?"

I was startled at this man's boldness. I hesitated — then I asked, "Is that it?"

"That's it," he replied.

"Look, I really appreciate your stopping by, but I'm not ready for this right now. Things will get better — they have to. And when they do, I'll be O.K. But thanks for stopping by. I wish you well in what you're trying to do, I really do. But it's just not for me. Maybe some other time. Anyway, thanks. Maybe — some other time, O.K? Good-bye."

He extended his hand once again, "Thanks for your time. Keep the booklet. Perhaps you'll find time to read it again. There's a prayer in the back which you can say anytime, day or night and God will hear you. Good-bye. It was a pleasure meeting you."

I watched him as he walked out the door. "Nice man," I thought. "Took a lot of courage to do what he did. Maybe I'll look at that booklet again someday. Right now I've got to figure out how to get out of this mess."

I walked back into my office, tossed the tract on my desk, closed the door and for some strange reason — I began to weep. Did I really believe that things would get better? No — not at all!

Six months later, I was divorced and my business was in the process of declaring bankruptcy. I was cleaning out my office on the last day before we closed the doors for good. While placing some papers from the top of my desk in a folder, I saw the little booklet my visitor had left with me on that day. I had forgotten all about it — but amazingly, it was still there. I quietly sat down and began to thumb through the first few pages. I could almost hear his voice as he explained the different steps to peace with God, especially the part about how much God loved me. How could that be? Everything I had done all my life was a failure. But there it was right there, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Then I remembered the man's closing words, "There's a prayer in the back which you can say anytime, day or night and God will hear you." I quickly searched for that page. As tears began to fill my eyes, I repeated the prayer and asked Jesus Christ to forgive me and come into my life and change me.

That was twenty-five years ago and my visitor was right. My life has never been the same since. My wife and I remarried and she also became a Christian. God dramatically changed both our lives. We joined a wonderful Bible-believing church and answered the altar call for salvation together. One year after our conversion, we volunteered to work with the Billy Graham Crusade that came to our city and one year after that, I was in Bible College studying to become a Minister of the Gospel. God not only restored my marriage but he gave me a new business as well — one serving him in full time ministry. I have been a pastor now for over 20 years.

My oldest daughter? She's now married with her own children and they are members of my church as is my youngest daughter and her family. In fact, all of our family have become believers. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ..." (John 1:12). God is faithful to his word!

As for the visitor to my office that day? I never saw him again and to this very day, I don't even know his name. I believe that I will see him again though — in heaven. With his boldness, he'll most likely be one of the first saints there to greet me. Then I'll know his name — for all eternity!

Don Kimbro is the Senior Pastor of Heights Christian Church in Albuquerque, NM

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