



# RECOVERED

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HOW AN ACCIDENT, ALCOHOL,  
& ADDICTION LED ME TO GOD

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**ROBBY GALLATY** | with Rob Suggs

"Robby Gallaty shares about his powerful transformation through the work of Jesus Christ in his book *Recovered*. After struggling with years of addiction, Robby encountered the living Savior! He learned firsthand to seek God for his identity; to be disciplined in prayer and Bible study; and to surround himself with godly mentors and those who will hold him accountable. His story offers hope to those who are struggling with addiction and challenges those who have settled for mediocrity in their relationship with Jesus."

**Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick**

Filmmakers, *War Room* and *Overcomer*

"*Recovered* is a fascinating, page turning story of the path to—and freedom from—drug addiction. But there is so much more. It's a book of hope and help, filled with practical insights in helping others follow Jesus Christ and grow in their knowledge of and obedience to Him—which is essential! Like Robby (whose teaching I have happily sat under), I have never gotten over the wonder of being saved. What you read will not only reignite your passion to introduce others to Jesus Christ and disciple them; it will show you how. This is a book I will heartily recommend to those whose loved ones are in the bondage of drug addiction and need to understand what's going on with them and within them!"

**Kay Arthur**

Author, International Teacher, and Cofounder and Brand Ambassador of Precept Ministries: Engaging people in 185 countries in 83 languages in relationship with God through knowing His Word

"You'll really love this book. Robby's story of meeting Jesus and being changed is a picture of what the love of God does for all of us."

**Bob Goff**

*New York Times* bestselling author of *Love Does* and *Everybody Always*

"This book reads like a novel. You can't help but feel that there are crazy things happening to a fictional character who you hope makes it. But what's striking is that it's real, a real story of a real person finding the power of real change. Bravo to Robby for the bravery it takes to share a story like this."

**Jon Acuff**

*New York Times* bestselling author of *Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done*

"This is an amazing book! Pastor Robby Gallaty openly shares his story and his battle with his addictions. His journey is real and honest. When he finally was able to turn his life and will completely over to Christ, his life dramatically changed. God continues to use him to help many with their struggles. This book is a must read!"

**Pastor John Baker**

Founder of Celebrate Recovery

"Robby's story epitomizes God's transformational grace! I can relate in so many ways. Robby's been very inspiring to me and many others on what happens when our daily, intentional focus is to live in God's will as opposed to our own. If you are battling, been affected, or know someone who's dealing with the disease of addiction—then *Recovered* is a must read!"

**Jeff Jarrett**

Hall of Fame Wrestler

"*Recovered* is a powerful read for anyone struggling with addiction and the desire to be free. As you turn the pages of this book, your shame will be lifted through Robby's depth and honesty as he shows you how to enter freedom through the power of Christ."

**Darryl Strawberry**

Four-time World Series champion and evangelist

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## Chapter 1

# TWO LIVES

Saturday night. Bourbon Street. Dinner at Galatoire's. If you've ever hung out in the legendary French Quarter of New Orleans, you may have heard of our favorite restaurant. The best French-Cajun cooking in the city.

It's February 2001. I'm enjoying my usual: lamb chops with peas, potatoes, and onions. That's my favorite. I eat everything but the green-rimmed pattern on the plate. Mom, Dad, and Lori are talking about the movie we're about to see. Seeing as many movies as we have, you tend to become an amateur critic.

Dinner and a movie has been our family's go-to weekend outing since I was a kid—I'm now twenty-four. We rotate between Galatoire's downtown, or maybe Tony Angelo's, if we're in the mood for Italian. Or Ralph & Kacoo's for traditional Cajun seafood. Seafood (any style) is always okay with me—breakfast, lunch, or dinner. My favorite is crawfish and crab omelets. But if Dad gets to choose, it's going to be Galatoire's, because they make him feel like a million bucks.

My dad is a solid working-class guy. He runs a body shop nearby in Chalmette. He fixes up cars, puts in long hours, and enjoys being pampered by waiters who know his name.



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He's never been into hunting or fishing, and he doesn't play golf. His hobbies are family, blockbuster movies, and a fantastic meal.

We're about to see *Cast Away* with Tom Hanks. Everyone's excited, except Mom. As usual, she's not all that excited. The dinner/movie thing isn't really her scene, but she's here for Dad.

My mom grew up with a tough family situation, and she's content just to stay home, cook in her own kitchen, and have her husband and two children near her.

Dad's on his second and probably final margarita of the evening—a drink with dinner is ingrained in New Orleans culture, but he never overdoes it. No way Mom would allow that. Dad is grinning over my anticipation. "They say Tom Hanks's costar is a volleyball? Really?" I'm asking.

Lori says, "That's what my friend says. She cried when he lost the volleyball." That draws a snort from Dad. He's laughing, covering his mouth to keep from spitting out his salad right there on the table.

"I saw that!" I say. "One point."

Over the years, mostly when I was in high school, we've had a little family game: Wait until your opponents are chewing, then make them laugh. You get one point if any food had to be spit out, two points for any liquid out the nose. Lori is giggling. Mom is rolling her eyes.

"Please," Mom says. "You're a grown man, Robby. And I *still* can't take you anywhere."

That makes it even harder for Dad, whose face is turning red now as he tries to swallow that bite. Nothing makes you laugh like being told not to laugh. That's why you should *never* take too big a bite around my family.

By the way, if he chokes, theoretically, that's three points. As yet, nobody has ever choked. Just saying.

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"So what do you plan to do with your life, Robby?" asks my mother, attempting to corral the scene into some semblance of adult conversation. "Will you try to take the test again?"

"I don't think so, Mom. I'm really kind of into—"

"Not bartending again, I hope. You can't make a career out of that."

"Sure I can, Mom."

At this point, I'm into the Rave party scene. I've tried a shot as a techno DJ and loved every second. When I'm into something, it's ninety to nothing. If the water looks good, I don't dip a toe. I dive in headfirst. At this point in my life—at pretty much every point in my life—I crave stimulation, and the crazy sensory overload of nightclubs gives me that. I'm the center of attention.

As for the test, well, a few months back I began a training course to become a stockbroker, urged on by my parents. I never was convinced this was my thing, but by all accounts I showed a lot of promise. I wore a coat and tie, came in every day, and had a slick trainer. I was preparing for what they call a Series 7 test. Supposedly nobody has ever failed a Series 7 after this particular trainer prepped them.

Mom and Dad were pretty pumped. The day of the test, they moved me into a shotgun double apartment, complete with a full set of furniture they bought for me and brought in. My parents are the best. They had a cake, congratulations banners, and were bursting with pride for their wonderful new stockbroker of a son—who had to come in and break it to them he'd failed that test.

I got a 68 out of 100, two points short of passing. Of course, Mom and Dad were crushed, but they still had high hopes—I had to grow up sometime, right? For them, that

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means a coat-and-tie fast-track job when the sun is out, instead of working in loud clubs until three in the morning.

My parents have specific hopes for me, but they'd do anything for us, for Lori and me. And we'd do anything for them.

The problem is, I've blown the test, and I don't plan to tell them why. I had it nailed until that last section, and then, well, I blew it. Crashed in flames. What happened there? The guys giving the test just couldn't figure it out. I knew, but nobody else was going to.

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Mom and Dad pick up the bill at Galatoire's, as usual. That's another thing about these family nights—it's always on Mom and Dad. As a teenager, I actually brought dates on these evenings with my parents, because it meant a movie, terrific food, and unsurpassed entertainment watching my family interact. My dates always adored my parents—everybody did.

We drive home together, to the home where I grew up, and then I say good night. Hugs all around. "I love you, Mom. Love you, Dad. You too, Lori." I watch them in the rearview mirror as I drive away, and I realize I'm shifting into my alternate mode—there's Family Robby, and then there's Street Robby.

It's now 10:00 p.m. I park about a block from my favorite hot spot, the Metropolitan, my club of choice. I make sure my stash is firmly in my right pocket. The left is for money. Before I climb out of the car, I crush and snort a couple OxyContin 40s. By the time I wipe the evidence clean from the case, the buzz kicks in. I'm ready for the night to begin.

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This, of course, is what ruined the final portion of my stockbroker test. But for Street Robby, it's a way of life.

I walk into the club with pounding subwoofers greeting my ears. Strobe lights flash quick images of familiar faces as I walk across the room.

"What's up, Robby?"

"Hey man!"

"You're lookin' good, brother!"

The regulars all know me. Fist-bumps and handshakes are extended as I make my way toward the bar. I'm fully aware this is a shadow family, the flip side of my real one. Unlike my true and permanent family, the faces here come and go; relationships don't go very deep. But it's still my world.

As a functioning addict, I'm able to hang out with my parents, and they never suspect a thing. I'm in full control. But in the clubs, there's nothing to hide. I can give in to my impulses, and nobody's going to judge me. Most are joining in with me.

"Robby!"

It's Ron, one of my acquaintances who buys drugs from me. His eyes gesture toward a door to a back room, and I follow him there. I yell into his ear, though with the music pounding, it sounds like a whisper.

"How many tonight?" I ask, reaching for my pocket.

He wants ten Oxys, twenty Ecstasy pills, and a few Somas. He'll turn it around in the club for a profit, which will support his habit for a few days. Unless he gives in and uses his stash before he can sell it. Which happens to him—and sadly, to me, if I don't sell it quick. Then the money's gone, and I owe more than I can sell.

I can tell something's on Ron's mind. He looks me in the eye and says, "Did you hear about G?" I shake my head, but I

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know what's coming. It occurs to me I haven't seen G around for a week or so.

"Gone. Overdose. His roommate found him."

I take a deep breath and close my eyes for a moment. I don't have to be told the cause of death. I can't think of anything to say. What *could* be said? No words are right.

Ron breaks the silence. "We've got to get out of this, man. This whole thing."

"Yeah, I know. We'll do it. Been thinking about that myself. There has to be more to life than this."

"Yeah. Let's get together and talk soon."

"For real. This week."

We fist-bump and part ways, both knowing we're not "getting out of this." There is no escape hatch. Well, actually, there is one—G found it.



The next few hours are a blur. I know we end up in the French Quarter; I remember walking by Galatoire's, where the other Robby was a few hours ago. Sunday is kind of fuzzy, too, and then it's Monday and the phone is ringing. I pick it up. It's Mom. She sounds incredibly tense.

"Hi, Mom! What's going on?"

Her voice is ice cold. Mom has her own brand of ice cold. "Robby, we know. We know what you did."

"What I did? What are you—"

Suddenly it hits home, like a knife slicing into my heart. The absolute worst possible thing I can imagine. Of *course* they know. I dreaded this day would come. I wait, speechless for once.

"Fifteen thousand dollars, Robby. *Fifteen thousand*. How could you do this to us? We would have given you anything

in the world, and you stole from us? Your father is so furious he—”

“Look, Mom, calm down. You don’t understand. It’s just . . .”

And that’s all I’ve got. All out of words. How am I supposed to explain why I’ve run up thousands of dollars on their credit card—why I need money so desperately?

Back when I was working for him, Dad trusted me with his business credit card. I memorized the number. One day, a few months back, I needed something and was flat broke, and thought about that card. *Just this once*. Dad wouldn’t mind. I’d pay him back.

But of course, I didn’t. It was just a little too easy to give in to temptation and snort my own stash instead of selling it, knowing I could quickly convert that card to cash on the buy-and-pawn plan. Dad wouldn’t notice, or so I told myself. He spent thousands of dollars each month, purchasing auto body parts for his business. He’ll never notice the periodic charges on his statement. He never checks his statements closely.

I got so used to abusing that card that one night, when I saw a Fender Stratocaster online, I decided it was meant for me. All the great guitarists—Hendrix, Clapton, all of ‘em—played Strats. I placed an order, throwing in a single stack Peavey amp. Then, a while later, the phone rang at Bob’s Collision Center, my dad’s shop. Somebody from the online store wanted Robert to know that his \$600 guitar was on back order.

Was there some mistake? My dad was more than certain he hadn’t ordered some expensive guitar.

Well, they said, your card was used for the transaction.

Mom and Dad began to study the last few credit card bills, and I was busted. It was like waking up from a bad

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dream into a full-fledged nightmare, because I realized the stupidity of thinking I could ever get away with something so dumb. I also realized, in the pit of my stomach, the terrible toll this would take on my parents' trust.

Mom says, quietly but firmly, "Don't ever come to our house again. We don't want to see you."

I spit out my reply in anger. "Well, I don't need either of you."

And we both hang up. I sit for an hour, trembling, thinking, *What have I done?*

For some time, my life has been spiraling wildly out of control, plunging downward. Now I've hit absolute bottom.

How did I get here?