

Ron Adams

From Coal Mine to Courtroom, Lawyer Turns Tragedy to Triumph

When it comes to God, Ron Adams thinks most people have the wrong idea. At least, he says, those who believe God is going to magically rescue them from whatever unhappy circumstances in which they find themselves.

“When people are struggling, they wonder why God doesn’t seem to be helping them,” Adams says. “I’ve sat in my office with people who love God and are poor, and I’ve met people who don’t care about God and are prosperous. Too many people want to blame God for their problems, but it’s not about Him. It’s about you.”

As a lawyer who handles bankruptcy, family law and personal injury, Adams has seen his share of tragedy. People come to him distraught. Many have lost their jobs, businesses and marriages. They feel hopeless, sometimes on the brink of suicide, tired of fighting a fight they feel cannot be won. Adams empathizes with, and is drawn to, such individuals. He can relate to their sense of discouragement. More importantly, he sees possibilities.

Adams’ own tragedy was more devastating than most people could ever imagine. A once-promising basketball player from Kentucky, where hoops are king, he was a rising star on the verge of a successful college and, perhaps, NBA career. Then, in the blink of an eye, his dreams came to a bone-crushing end, 300 feet below ground, in the dim light of a dusty coal mine.

“What you say actually influences what you think, and that changes your reality.”

— Ron Adams, attorney



Photo by Joe Archer

Out of Darkness

Coal mining was a way of life in Uniontown, Kentucky. Like most men in the community, Adams’ father was a miner. He was also an alcoholic who drank his wages and abused his family, beating his wife and belittling his son.

“Dad was always telling me I was never going to amount to anything,” Adams says. “I believed him. He was the grown-up, so I thought he probably was right.”

Adams’ parents separated and reunited more times than he can remember. Then came the night when, at age 12, he watched helplessly as his father

pinned his mother to the floor and punched her in the face until she bled. The next day, mother and son left for good, and moved 60 miles away.

As the new kid on the block, Adams was initially ridiculed by other students in junior high school. Then, something amazing happened. Although mediocre in class, he excelled at basketball. Suddenly, the geeky kid who wore ill-fitting clothes was a champion. His popularity soared as he helped propel his teams to victory through junior and senior high school.

Adams entered Cumberland College on a basketball scholarship. While a freshman, a leg injury knocked him out of competition. Adams went home to recover, intending to return to school – and to basketball – the following year. In the meantime, he took a job in a coal mine.

One day, while filling in for a co-worker, Adams was operating a shuttle car. With little headroom to spare, he drove slowly into the far reaches of the mine. As the ceiling got lower and scraped his hard hat, Adams tried to stop, but could not reach the brake. In seconds, his head became wedged between the roof of the mine and 18 tons of machinery.


“I remember hearing cracking and popping,” he says. “I fell off the car and I lay there with my face in the coal. Trying to move was real weird because nothing worked.”

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Photo by Joe Archer

Ron and Connie Adams have been married since 1991, and recently started a ministry called His Well™. “The really cool thing is that she’s seen the changes in me first hand,” Ron says.


W. Ron Adams PSC JD/MBA
Attorney at Law

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...continued from the previous page

At the hospital, doctors gave Adams the bad news — the accident had broken his neck and left him a quadriplegic. He would never walk again or have full use of his arms. He would never play basketball. *He would never amount to anything.*

“I was sad, scared, angry,” he recalls. “I cried all night. I woke up the next morning and realized my face hurt from crying, so I had only made things worse. For me, that was the catalyst for moving forward, because in the final analysis you either do something or you do nothing. And if you do nothing, a bad situation just gets worse.”

The Faith Factor

Despite overwhelming physical difficulties, returning to college in a wheelchair proved to be a blessing in disguise. Without basketball to distract him, Adams had more time to study, and began getting straight A's. After earning a Bachelor's degree in business at Murray State University, he enrolled at the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law, where he was the school's first student to earn a JD/MBA.

Adams became a lawyer in 1987. Things went well, until he was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1995. Although benign, it left him deaf in one ear and forced him to quit law for three years. Finally, a failed business venture devastated him financially. Again, Adams' life-long pattern of bad luck was repeating itself.



Photo by Joe Archer

Adams became hooked on Osteen's philosophy of positive thinking and personal responsibility. He obsessively surfed the Internet for other Osteen messages, reading his books and watching his videos. And, he studied the Bible.

about my abilities. Then, it started making sense. I realized that I wasn't going to rise higher than I believed I was worthy.”

His Well™

Today, Ron Adams is back in the legal profession, operating a successful practice in Erlanger, Kentucky. But while he enjoys representing clients in court, there is nothing he loves more than representing Jesus to anyone who is willing to listen. Adams and his wife Connie have launched a new ministry called His Well, spreading their faith not just through words, but with deeds.

“A well is where people go to get filled,” Adams says. “Christ repeated, three times, ‘Feed my sheep.’ He wants us to have life more abundantly. It is our desire to love Him, and to help others experience heaven on the way to Heaven.”

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“I started wondering why bad things kept happening to me,” he says. “I was really deep soul-searching.”

Then came a turning point. While visiting a cousin who had recently lost her husband, Adams caught motivational evangelist Joel Osteen on television.

“His message was *Bloom Where You're Planted*,” Adams recalls. “I thought, ‘Wow! This is good stuff!’”

Other motivational speakers and ministers were influential, too — Joyce Meyer, Mark Henken and Zig Zigler. But to Adams, there was something special about Osteen that helped him believe the best was yet to come.

“What you say actually influences what you think, and that changes your reality,” Adams says. “I started thinking about how my dad and other people used to tell me I was never going to amount to anything. I had deep insecurities


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