

# Talking Points

**M.O.T.E.**

Men on the Edge

Wisdom for a Healthy Marriage

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My name is Kevin Martinez.

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My story begins like many people. I come from a broken family. I grew up in Mexico in a poor middle-class family. My parents divorced when I was 2 years old. Before I met Christ, I was confused about my life, sad because my parents were not together, I felt purposeless, dissatisfied, empty and lonely.

Because of our financial circumstances I had to take care of my 2-year-old sister when I was 11 years old. It was a blessing in disguise, however, and it helped me prepare for my future and become the person I am today. At the time it was a big responsibility for an 11-year-old. My mom and my step father worked at a restaurant in the city two hours away from home. I would get home from school at 2:00pm and my mom would kiss my sister and me goodbye and leave to work. She would not come back until 1 or 2am the next morning. My sister and I would spend the rest of the day doing my homework, watching movies, playing games, doing chores around the house, and my sister's favorites: dancing and coloring. We had that routine for a year and a half. During this time, I started to visit my biological father on the weekends to try to build a relationship with him. He would take me to church. At the beginning I thought it was weird. Seeing people cry, raise their hands, listen to the preacher for hours. But after a couple months as I opened my heart, I met Jesus Christ and I accepted him as my redeemer and the savior of my soul. He is the one that gave me direction, purpose, fulfillment, love, companionship and guidance as to how to raise my 2-year-old sister. All I could teach my sister is what I was taught as a child and what I could understand from God's word.

The next couple of years I grew spiritually and fell in love with Jesus and His plan for my life. I no longer felt empty, lonely, purposeless, dissatisfied, sad, or confused about my life. I felt more loved than ever before, hopeful for my future, full of energy, purposeful and passionate about sharing the good news with anyone I came across. I found a small church near my home and became the worship leader and the evangelist of a 30-person congregation.

I always knew I had the opportunity to come to the US since I was born here. I was 15 years old and I wanted more of everything in my life. I was full of God's dreams in my life and wanting to make a bigger impact in God's kingdom and for my family. I chose to come back to the US. I arrived at the home of one of my uncles, whom I had only talked to over the phone a couple of times in my life. I was so excited to be in the US because there was so much opportunity and I could do whatever I wanted.

Everything was different. The way people looked, talked, dressed, and behaved. The cars, the houses, and lifestyle, the language, culture; everything was new to me. I felt so different than everyone and all I wanted to do was to fit in. So, I made fitting in my goal, which led me to compare myself to others. I felt inferior to everyone else, physically and mentally. I became materialistic. It ultimately led me away from my relationship with God. Although

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Since, my parents could not support me financially I had to work and to pay for my own things. During my sophomore, junior and senior years of high school I worked at a restaurant as a busboy. I stopped going to church, and did not keep God in the center of my life. I began to drift. In college I started to party and work more. Using alcohol and marijuana, my life began to feel just like when I was 11 years old.

I met a beautiful girl; we were both very independent and a year into our relationship we were about to get an apartment together. We thought to honor God we should get married. So, we did, at 19 and 20 years old we thought we were going in the right direction but the bad habits continued. Using marijuana and pleasure seeking led us to a dark place in our marriage. My wife committed adultery and I got addicted to pornography. We tried to solve the issues. I pretended the adultery never happened and didn't tell my wife about my pornography problem. We read books, spoke to counselors, attended church but we did not deal with the problem at its roots, with honesty from our hearts. So, two years later I built an emotional wall between my wife and me. Anger and bitterness started taking over me. My wife and I fought many times, hurtful words were said and things broken and holes made in the walls. We were about to give up, I was ready for divorce. After three years of marriage, I was so done.

One day on the weekly news at saddleback I saw "[Men on the Edge \(MOTE\), a men's support group giving hope to men with marital problems](#)". I attended a MOTE evening meeting. I was exhausted, hopeless, and bitter, all I could do as soon as I stepped into the group was to cry as I told my story. With the support and love God showed me through those men that Thursday night; it sparked hope in my heart which allowed me to keep going. The journey has not been easy but now I can say that my wife and I are getting better and closer to each other day by day. Letting Christ be the center of our life, letting Him heal, restore and rebuild our marriage and our relationship with Him.

Kevin Martinez