



CityLinC
70 Calhoun St.
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Phone: (269) 969-9181
Fax: (269) 969-9465

Website: www.CityLinC.org
E-Mail: Info@CityLinC.org

Chaplain's Newsletter Spring 2026

In his book, To Own a Dragon: Reflections on Growing Up Without a Father, author Donald Miller recounts his story:

A friend of mine had hit rock bottom due to his drug addiction and alcoholism. When I last saw him, he was a mess – sickly, pale, emaciated, with disgusting sores all over his body. I didn't think he would live out the year. Several months later, that same friend picked me up at an airport, clean, sober, robust, and healthy. I was amazed at the obvious changes that had taken place in both attitude and appearance.

My friend then detailed a single incident that gave him the strength to endure a long, painful rehabilitation. Apparently, his father had flown in to attend a particularly difficult recovery meeting with his son. In that meeting, with his father present, the young man was required to confess all his issues and weaknesses.

When he finished, his father stood up to address the group of hard-core substance abusers at the meeting. The father looked toward his son and said respectfully, *"I have never loved my son as much as I do at this moment. I love him, and I want all of you to know how much I love him."*

From that moment on, my friend said that for the first time in his life, he was able to believe that God loved him too. He believed that if God, his father, and his wife all loved him, despite his struggles with drugs and alcohol, he had all the support he needed to fight back against the disease that had plagued him his entire adult life. Their strength became his strength, and he was finally able to overcome his addiction.

We all come to turning points in our lives. Sometimes, during those crucial moments, we are the recipient of some wonderful encouragement that makes us feel like we can conquer the world. Sadly, there are also significant moments when we are abandoned, criticized, or ignored just when we need a little attention or a kind word. This often leads to feelings of rejection.

Nothing quite hurts like the message of being rejected. Somehow, it conveys the implication that we have not measured up to a certain standard. Feelings of rejection create an internal storm of immense proportions. Rejection can lead to anger, resentment, insecurity, and other behavioral issues.

My friend Patrick had this to say: *"I had gone through rehab many times, but it just never stuck with me. When I met Mike Howard, I thought it was just more of the same. It wasn't. Mike was the most non-judgmental person I have ever met. It became obvious to me that this isn't a job for him. He really cares about us addicts as people. I once asked him where this passion comes from and he just quoted a Bible verse to me that has always stuck with me. It was Romans 8:1, which said, "Now, there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus." He also quoted what Jesus said in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you or forsake you." I knew right away that I had found someone who was not going to be put off by my addiction and who was going to stick with me for the long haul.*

I wound up committing my life to Jesus and I have found a source of strength I didn't know existed in me. Thanks be to God for his care, and for Mike directing me to take another path. After 20 plus years of substance abuse, I am now clean and sober, and I promise to stay that way. I grew up without a dad to guide me, so I ran the streets all night because my mom had to work crazy hours to support my brothers and me. Mike filled that role for me, and even though I have graduated the program, I still call him to get the advice and encouragement I need."

I appreciate Patrick's kind words. People often ask me when I am going to retire, but the truth is I still get so much fulfillment from a ministry that is rich and rewarding, I know that retirement is not in the immediate future. There are too many "Patricks" still out there. I understand that I can't help them all, but I *can* help one person at a time.

Blessings, .

Pastor Mike

Pastor Mike Howard

If you would like to contribute to this hands-on, frontlines practical ministry, then please send your support to CityLinC. Put my name or just write "Chaplain" in the memo box and it will be directed to my part of the CityLinC ministry. The struggle against addiction in our community is real and there are many needs, so your contribution is vital and much appreciated. I thank God for you and for your support, both financially and prayerfully.