

Elite SEAL Team 6 Operator Shares His Powerful Encounter With God

Eddie Penney, a Marine and Navy SEAL who served with the elite SEAL Team 6, had previously opened up on The Shawn Ryan Show about his dramatic transformation from a life defined by violence to one centered on faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, his testimony is going viral yet again.

Penney admitted that before his conversion, he viewed Jesus as someone to fear. "I didn't know you," he recalled saying to God during his first real prayer. "You know my past. You know how you scare me."

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His story, shared in his book *Unafraid*, describes years spent in combat zones where killing became second nature. He said he reached a point where he was "addicted to taking the evil off this planet," but the trauma and guilt that followed left him searching for something more.

After returning home, Penney's life began to unravel. He battled anger, alcohol and isolation until his then-girlfriend urged him to attend a men's retreat in Oklahoma. "I didn't know it was a Christian camp," he said. "It just sounded like a bunch of guys shooting, eating and hanging out."

The retreat, based on John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, focused on the idea that men are designed to be protectors and spiritual leaders. Penney said the teaching about fatherhood, leadership and the battle between good and evil started to affect him. "Every movie has three things," he said, recalling

one session. "There's a hero, a villain and a love story. That's exactly what the Bible is—Jesus, Satan and God's love for us."

During the weekend, Penney noticed many men breaking down in tears as they prayed. He struggled to understand it until he faced his own moment of surrender. "You can take a blade and stick it in some flesh, but you're going to have a hard time going outside by yourself and praying," he said. "And I had that conversation with myself. I went out there and said my first words to God ever."

He described sitting on a rock as the morning sun hit his face. "This warm sunbeam just nailed my face and warmed my whole body," he said. "It just happened right when I started talking to Him." Though he brushed it off as coincidence at the time, he later recognized it as the first moment he felt God's presence.

On the final night of the retreat, a young man approached him and asked to pray over him. "As soon as he put his hand on me and started praying, I lost it," Penney said. "It was starting to make sense. It was all making sense to me."

The next morning, as the worship team played "10,000 Reasons" by Matt Redman, something inside him changed. "The beat of that song and the words of that song rocked my body," he said. "It was different. Something changed. I felt different and I started to smile. That's what God did to me right then and there."

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By the end of the retreat, the organizers publicly recognized him for the transformation they saw. He was given a cross-shaped pen carved from olive wood from Israel. "They said, 'We can tell a change in you,'" Penney said. "I started crying right there on stage in front of all these men, and I didn't care."

Driving home afterward, Penney said he couldn't stop crying as he tried to tell his girlfriend about the weekend. "I felt so loved," he said. "It was just making sense to me. I could feel it inside."

Later, still unsure if his salvation was real, Penney asked God for a sign. "I was sitting at a red light saying, 'Show me I'm saved,'" he said. "And I look over to this sign, and all I see is one word: saved."

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Today, Penney says he knows that moment confirmed everything. After years of living by the sword, he found peace in surrendering his life to God. "I was about 80% sure that I found God," he said. "But now I know—I did."

To listen to Eddie Penney's testimony, click here (viewer discretion: strong language).

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to *Charisma magazine*.