



## **A Journey from Trial Attorney to Author and Beyond** by Paul Turk

In 2003, my younger brother Gary was diagnosed with cancer. He was having terrible pains in his back and ultimately the cancer spread into his bones. For one and a half years he waged a valiant fight against very difficult odds. He went from a big, strapping guy to a man who looked as though he had just been released from a prisoner of war camp. He died on November 5, 2004 at the age of forty-five. Gary left behind his beloved wife, two teenage children, our parents and many others. I spoke at his funeral, which was one of the hardest things I have done in my life. Although Gary was a fervent follower of Jesus, and I knew and spoke about how Gary was in Heaven, I still had many questions for Our Lord, and some anger for this being allowed to happen. The grief which I saw my parents, sister-in-law, niece and nephew going through, as well as my own, caused questions of my faith in the goodness of God to arise.

My family and I went back home the Christmas after Gary died. It had only been a month and a half since his passing so no one was in a very festive mood. But on Christmas Day something happened that will never leave my memory. My wife, three children and I, along with my parents and one of my other brothers, went to the cemetery to visit Gary's grave. I brought with us two ornaments to hang on the evergreen tree behind Gary's headstone. One was a Mickey Mouse ornament because Gary loved Disney World. The other was a fishing ornament because fishing was Gary's favorite sport. When we arrived at the cemetery the weather was cloudy and cold. However, as I hung the ornaments on the tree, the clouds parted and a beautiful rainbow appeared over us. Neither my family nor I believe that the rainbow appearing at that precise time was a coincidence. Rather, we all know that it was a sign from God not to worry about Gary because he was in Heaven and no longer in pain. He was now healed and rejoicing in eternity! That rainbow helped me to overcome the faith issues I had been struggling with. Although I still miss my brother greatly, I know that some day we will be reunited in Heaven.

After the death of my brother, my family suffered the loss of three male cousins – one each year in the years of 2005, 2006 and 2007. Two of these men died from cancer related causes. The other committed suicide. All of them died in the prime of their lives, as did my brother, and none of them made to it the “golden years of retirement.”

In addition to my brother and cousins dying prematurely, I also had a close friend (Burt) who had given up a successful career as a salesman to become a missionary in Thailand along with his wife. After almost four years in Thailand, he became sick, suffered a severe stroke and then became almost totally physically incapacitated. I vividly recall visiting him on many occasions when he could not get out of his reclining chair. Despite his debilitating illness, which ultimately led to his death, Burt always had a smile on his face and words of praise and thanksgiving for Jesus on his lips. My relatives' deaths and Burt's physical trauma leading to his passing really struck home with me that none of us know when we will leave this planet nor do we know the circumstances under which we will die, or the quality of life we may have to endure before we pass on.

For a number of years, I had dreamed of being an author, but had not acted on it. But my dream of becoming an author – one who would write for God - would not leave me. So, in 2009, when our youngest daughter was about to graduate from high school and leave for college, I made the decision, with my wife's agreement, to change careers from attorney to author. I left the Gunster firm and began my career as an author of fictional legal novels that are Christian based.

I may have planned on being a Christian author (which I still believe God is calling me to do), but little did I know the additional plans God had in store for me. While I was writing my first book and doing some needed research, I contacted the Chaplain's office at Glades Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison in Belle Glade, FL. I wanted to visit the prison because portions of my first book contained prison scenes and I wanted those scenes to be realistic. An assistant chaplain who I spoke with was very nice, but also seemed somewhat skeptical of my motives. Instead of trying to arrange for me to visit the prison, he referred me to the Kairos prison ministry. I contacted Kairos, explained why I was interested and was accepted onto one of their prison teams in February, 2010. They had a need for new volunteers and accepted my motive for joining. But I was told by a senior member of the team not to go into Glades Correctional with my own agenda, but to keep my mind and heart open to what God was telling me.

I could not have imagined what God had planned. After my first four day weekend I attended, my motives to stay a prison minister were no longer connected with doing research for my book. I had seen and felt many God inspired experiences. Kairos means God's special time and it certainly was. Each time there was a four day weekend, I participated in it, and was mightily blessed, perhaps more than the inmates who had come to the program. I also attended the monthly reunion programs at the prison for inmates who had graduated from the Kairos program. In addition to Kairos, I also became a volunteer at Glades Correctional for the Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach and would go there a couple times each month to participate in portions of the Catholic Mass that lay ministers were allowed to perform, and to distribute

Communion to the Catholic inmates.

At the end of 2011, Glades Correctional was closed down by the State for budgetary reasons. But I did not want to stop being a member of Kairos, so I joined the prison ministry team at South Bay Prison, which is another maximum security prison in the Glades. I continue to be a prison minister there, and continue to experience God's hands at work.

I have written three books known as "The Taylor Series." They all follow the lives of John Taylor, a Palm Beach attorney and Anna Taylor, his wife, who is an elementary school teacher. The first novel is entitled, "Faith Beyond the Trials." The legal plot involves a felony DUI and a civil lawsuit surrounding the automobile crash. I have also written a screenplay based upon "Faith Beyond the Trials," and hope to have it made into a movie. I believe that it would be a family friendly, inspirational Christian movie. The second book is "Trials of Hope," where the legal scenes follow a high stakes will contest between two siblings who have become acrimonious rivals. The trilogy is called, "Love On Trial." It involves a divorce case where child custody is the primary issue. In this book the Taylors go on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the clergyman who has been a source of encouragement and inspiration to them through their life trials. Although the book is fictional, the scenes related to the Holy Land are based upon a Pilgrimage I made in 2011 with Father James Quinn, upon whom the character of Father James Anderson in the novels is inspired. There are other scenes in the books regarding prison and a food pantry, as well as other portions of the novels, which are based upon real life events. My books are intended to be inspirational novels focusing on faith, hope, love and law. For each book, I wrote a different prayer that serves as the foundation of the novels. Those prayers have been put on bookmarks and are given away with the sale of each book made by me or on my website.

My books are available for purchase on my website, [www.paulturkbooks.com](http://www.paulturkbooks.com). Signed copies, along with the bookmark, are sent with all orders. The novels are also available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, both in paperback and electronic form, as e-books.

Although my wife and I have had to make some changes to our economic lifestyle, while I work at my new career, God has been very faithful to us in providing for our needs to be met and in bringing our family even closer together. With God's blessing, I hope to continue writing for many years to come. In fact, I have recently started working on my fourth novel, which will be a spinoff from "The Taylor Series."

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Paul Turk practiced law with the Gunster law firm in West Palm Beach, FL from 1979 until 1986. He was a civil trial lawyer and litigated many different types of cases, primarily in the business and eminent domain fields. In 1986, Turk formed his own law firm and became a Florida Bar Board Certified Trial Lawyer. He continued in solo practice until 2000, when Gunster asked him to return to the firm. From 2000 until 2009, Turk was a shareholder in the firm and continued his practice as a civil trial attorney. On March 31, 2009, he left the practice of law to become an author of Christian-based, fictional legal novels.