

# Alcohol-related wreck changed future student minister's life\_112204

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## Alcohol-related wreck changed future student minister's life

**By Leann Callaway**

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SUGAR LAND—Casey Cease killed a friend nine years ago in an alcohol-related car accident, and guilt left him wanting to kill himself.

Now Cease—a Texas Baptist youth evangelist and student minister—travels around the country speaking to teenagers and young adults, telling them how God took him from complete brokenness and transformed him through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The summer before his senior year of high school, Cease invited some friends to his house for a July 4 barbecue.

“It was like most other parties I attended where we drank beer, played games and hung out,” he recalled. “I was already struggling with depression during this time, and as the night wore on, things just got worse.”

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Casey  
Cease  
shares his  
Christian  
testimony  
at a youth  
gathering.

At about 1 a.m., he and one of his guests got into an argument.

“I ran inside my house, grabbed the keys to my 1995 Z-28 Camaro and jumped into my car,” he said.

Friends surrounded his car and tried to stop him, but they eventually gave up, deciding to give him some time to calm down on his own.

“When they left, I drove over a curb to get around the car that was in front of me, and I sped off,” he said. “As I came to the exit of my neighborhood, I stopped and began sobbing. I finally gathered myself enough to decide that I just wanted to go back home”

He turned onto a main street and began speeding home.

“Going around a curve, I suddenly saw my friend John in the middle of the street with his hands raised in the air as if to stop me,” he said. “I tried to swerve the car, but John jumped in the same direction. His body rolled up on the hood of my car and crashed through my windshield. I lost control of my car and crashed into a tree. I was unconscious, and John was killed instantly.”

After the accident, Cease was placed on suicide watch in a mental hospital. During this time, John's parents came to visit him.

“They told me that they were Christians and that they forgave me,” Cease

said. "At the time it was impossible for me to understand this, but now I know that they were being merciful by not giving me what I deserved and extending grace to me. They were a true Christian witness by living out a testimony to the power of Jesus Christ in their family's life."

Not long after, Cease made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

"Over the course of my senior year of high school, I began attending church and reading the student Bible that my mother had bought for me," he said. "It seemed like everywhere I turned, God was drawing me to himself."

Following his high school graduation, Cease went to court and pleaded no contest to negligent homicide—a 4th-degree felony.

"I was placed on five years of probation, had 200 hours of community service—of which, part of my service was speaking to students—and I had a breathalyzer in my car," he explained.

While speaking in schools, Cease developed a passion to share the message of Jesus Christ with students.

"It was during that time when my heart was really for helping students," he said. "I was a young believer, and the youth minister at the church I was attending offered me an internship in youth ministry. I served for two summers as an intern."

In 1999, Cease accepted God's call to enter into full-time ministry.

Today, he serves as the student pastor at Crossbridge Community Church, a Texas Baptist congregation in Richmond. In addition, he is a sought-after youth communicator and books more than 100 events each year, including citywide outreach events, revivals, retreats, Disciple Now weekends and youth camps.

"Understandably, I am often asked to share my testimony at ministry

events," he said. "I really try to utilize my story more as an illustration of God's grace extended to man through Christ, rather than allowing my story to be the main topic."

Over the past year, Cease has distributed more than 5,000 free copies of his testimony CD titled "Tragedy to Truth" throughout the country.

Cease also speaks in school assemblies and presents a program called "Next Choice," where he shares his life experiences and emphasizes the importance of the choices we make and how they can have lifelong consequences.

"When I speak in schools, I try to have a church in the area or a campus Christian club to sponsor an event where I can share Jesus directly, as well," he explained.

"One of the main things that I have learned from the students I work with is that they are tired of people sugarcoating everything, and they are hungry for truth. Even lost kids have said that they appreciate me being real and just telling it like it is, rather than spending the entire time trying to make them like me. Students really are starving for the truth and want it presented without fear.

"Another thing that is very apparent in the lives of students today is that their behavior is a symptom of a life that is seeking satisfaction in places and things that were never meant to satisfy them.

"While the expression of their sin may be different and more extreme than older generations, it is still rooted in an existence that is dependent upon culture rather than being dependent and satisfied in Christ. That is why the mission of this ministry is to assist people in shifting their dependency on culture to a dependency on Jesus Christ, and to help people live life with purpose—for the glory of God and his kingdom."

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