

I Want to Go to Heaven...But Not Yet

Joe Wise

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Joe Wise has been sober for more than twenty-two years—but has suffered serious medical consequences as a result of his drinking. In *I Want to Go to Heaven ... But Not Yet*, Wise tries to help readers cope with adversity. He shares lessons learned from his own life as well as from his professional experience.

The author's fight with alcoholism began when he was a pastor and his church members introduced him to social drinking. Having no prior experience with alcohol, Wise quickly succumbed to its power. For about seventeen years, he was in denial about his addiction; so he knows how alcoholics think and why they find it so difficult to stop drinking.

As the author describes his past, he makes good use of his current knowledge by explaining his alcoholic symptoms, such as blackouts. Wise offers sound advice to readers by explaining that alcoholics cannot stop drinking by using will power alone, but rather they need professional help.

Chapter one is organized around individual family members and stresses their survivalist characteristics. The following chapters are mainly chronological. At times, however, the author appropriately breaks the chronology to add current information. For example, regarding his previous belief that most of the congregants at Emanuel Church did not know about his drinking problem, he writes, "... I believe now that many people did know."

With graduate degrees in divinity and counseling, Wise has held several pastoral positions and, since 1990, has worked as a professional counselor. He is currently an associate at Woodlands Family Institute in The Woodlands, Texas. His previous book is *There's a Drunk in the Pulpit*.

Unfortunately, this book lacks thorough editing and has various typographical errors. Additionally, Wise contradicts himself a couple of times. For example, he writes that on December 28, 1986, he was arrested for causing a disturbance in a convenience store. The episode inspired him to get professional help. He then writes, "I stopped drinking altogether on December 27, 1986."

In spite of serious physical disabilities, Wise continues to counsel clients who have addiction problems. *I Want to Go to Heaven ... But Not Yet* will benefit both family members of alcoholics and alcoholics themselves, especially Christians who have acknowledged their problem.

NORMA D. KELLAM (February 16, 2012)

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