

A Brief Biography of James Russell Orr

When Christian songwriter James Orr was born in 1963, he was destined for a journey filled with music. When he was *born again*, however, he soon found out who was actually filling the music - and his heart.

James grew up in Mississippi and fell in love with music. During his junior and senior high years, he studied this fine art and began playing several musical instruments. James would be recognized with several honors including the coveted John Phillips Sousa Award. When he was sixteen years old, he picked up the electric guitar for the first time. Over the years, he would learn to hone his skills. Then, in 1982, James began writing his own songs. It wasn't until four years later that James found where his talents truly came from.

As the glory days of high school started slowly slipping away, James went on to college. Having moved out of his family home with the hope of attending the University of Texas, James began finding out what worldly pleasures awaited him. He began experimenting with drugs after meeting a couple of acquaintances. Over the next six months, he found that experimenting had turned from a foothold into a stronghold. "I escalated to the point where I was smoking pot several times a day," James says. This experience reached a climax one night when his "friends" convinced him to try psychedelic *shrooms*. "I went on an eight-hour *terror trip*," said James. Under the strong influence of the drugs, James thought his own life was ending. His mind began making him see horrible things that he was convinced were real. "I saw blood raining from the sky," said James. "I thought I had been placed in an asylum," James added.

When the eight-hour trip ended, another experience began. "I found myself walking alone somewhere in Austin crying and praying to God," says James. Although he was raised in a Christian home and regularly attended church, James had never firmly grasped what salvation means. In a strange moment of clarity after the storm the drugs had rained on his mind, James began praying out to God. "I asked him to take control of my life," James said, "and He faithfully answered my prayer."

From that day forward, James's life was changed. He began using his musical talents to serve the Lord. Today, his Christian songwriting has earned him several accolades and has touched many hearts and souls. He and Patti, his wife of nine years, serve the Lord gladly at Fellowship Bible Church in Texarkana, Texas, where they both participate in the children's ministry. James also serves on the church's worship team both singing and playing. He also volunteers at a local pregnancy crisis center.

Now, it is James's hope that God will use the music he creates to reach others and be a source of comfort just as Christ comforted his own soul on a lonely road in Austin one late evening.

By Jason Whitehorn

James resides in Arkansas with his wife and two children. He is employed at a manufacturing facility as an engineer.