

FROM FATHERLESS TO FOUND

BY LEXI AGGEN

Torrance Wilson considered himself a normal kid. His life seemed great from the outside. He was born to a middle-class family in Houston, Texas, and spent his time attending summer camp, gaming, and making the honor roll at school.

One day, while searching for coins in his mother's purse to use at the arcade, his world flipped. Stashed inside was a crack pipe. He confronted his mother about the paraphernalia. She gently wiped a tear from his eye and told him not to worry – she was just holding it for a friend. Even at the age of 9, he knew it was a lie.

Four years later, Torrance's father left because of his mother's addiction. But he didn't just leave his mother; he left Torrance, too. Torrance never forgot the day he overheard his father disown him in order to avoid paying child support. His heart broke.

Torrance and his mother moved to an impoverished neighborhood. His mother continued to abuse cocaine, and Torrance began skipping school. In his new neighborhood, he was surrounded by drug users and drug dealers.

He watched as the users on his street fell further into poverty and the drug dealers made thousands of dollars a day. He knew which side of the equation he wanted to be on. A man offered him \$20 to deliver a rock of cocaine, and from that day on, he was one of the dealers.

He was eventually caught selling drugs and sent to an incarcerated youth boot camp. While there, Torrance evaluated his life: His mother was addicted to cocaine, and his father, an alcoholic, didn't want him. On top of that, he now had a young daughter to care for. He felt hardened by life.

Torrance left the boot camp with a heart unchanged.

However, he came out in his best physical condition yet. Torrance felt he had been training to go back into his life of crime: Now he could outrun the police.

He continued to deal drugs and evaded serious convictions – until he assaulted a Houston Police Department officer.

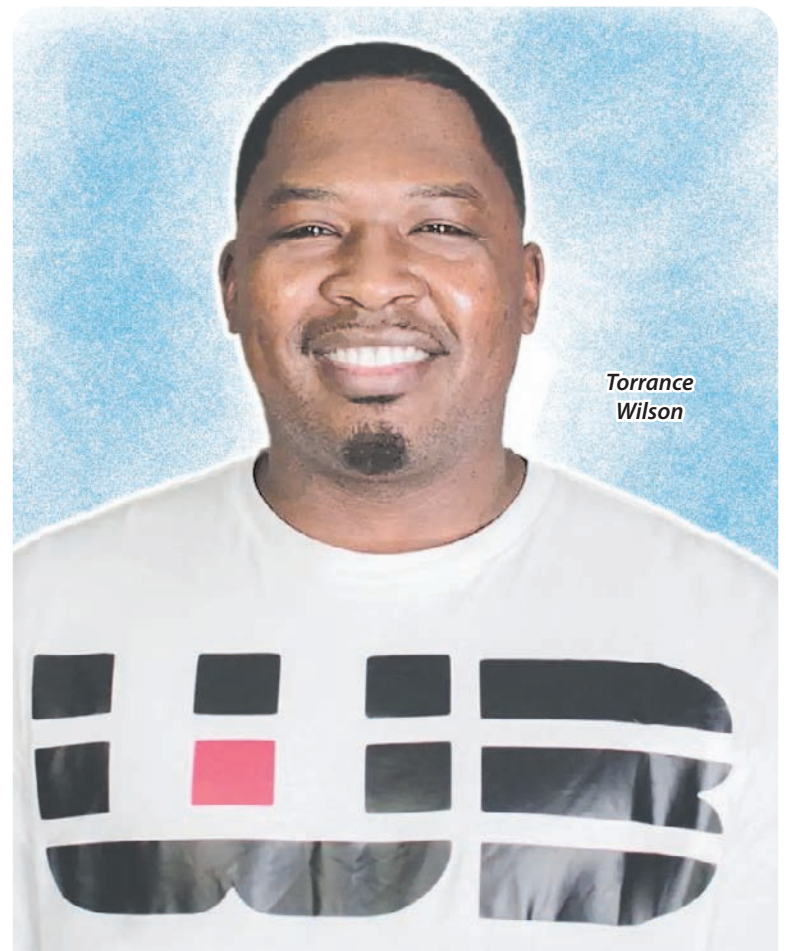
The judge sentenced him to four years behind bars. Torrance wanted to get his life back on track upon

release. He longed to be there for his daughter in ways his own father never was for him.

He married his daughter's mother and the couple had a son together. Torrance tried his best to be a good father, but things didn't go according to plan. Soon he turned back to drug dealing, and his marriage fell apart.

Torrance got a call one day that there was a detective waiting for him at home. His now ex-wife had accused Torrance of a robbery. He went on the run but was soon arrested. No one believed he was innocent, and he was sentenced to two years for robbery by threat.

Torrance recalls that this was his most difficult experience behind bars. Every day, he woke up knowing he wasn't guilty of this crime. But over time, his heart softened. He realized that while he was innocent of the robbery, he was not innocent. He was a career criminal. Torrance served his full two years and came out with the determination to do things differently. He joined a church, lived life with his kids, and avoided encounters



Torrance Wilson

with law enforcement until he was caught with a gun in his car. He was arrested for a third time and was now considered a habitual criminal.

While awaiting trial, he was shocked to find out that his grandmother had lung cancer.

She was the only person in Torrance's life who lived out her faith.

Whenever he would get into trou-

ble with the law, he would ring her up and ask her to get on the "main line" for him, believing God would hear her prayers before his own.

Unable any longer to speak, Torrance's grandmother had written on a piece of paper that she loved him. He came back to his cell and cried. He began to pray.

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Unforgiveness destroys your heart

BY BILL ADAMS OF THE CHRISTIAN POST

MANY have heard of "The Nazi Hunter," Simon Wiesenthal. He's famous for tracking down Nazi perpetrators of the Holocaust and bringing them to justice. Fewer know of Wiesenthal's wrestling with the conundrum of justice versus... Forgiveness.

The beginnings of his inner struggle are documented in his 1969 book *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*. The author tells of when he was a Polish-Jewish concentration camp prisoner, assigned as an orderly, disposing of medical and human waste at a German field hospital.

Unexpectedly, a young SS soldier, near death from his wounds, summons Wiesenthal to his bedside. He proceeds to confess all his trespasses, including aiding in the murder of 300 Jewish women and children who had been



The entrance gate to Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

herded into a house, set ablaze, and gunned down when they tried to escape the hellish flames. This German soldier seeks forgiveness from a Jew. His final words to the prisoner are, "I know that what I am asking is almost too much for you, but without your answer I cannot die in peace." Mentally dazed from malnutrition, cruel treatment, and the surreal nature of this

confession, Wiesenthal is dumbfounded as to what to say or do.

In the end, he says nothing, leaves the room, and spends the rest of his life wondering what he should have done.

Should he have forgiven the dying soldier? What could he have even said that would absolve the man's guilt? Does a Nazi murderer, though sorrowful, even deserve forgiveness? Can you forgive a crime that was not against yourself, but against others?

What about justice – wouldn't forgiveness undermine justice? But couldn't he at least have tried to help a desperate man die in peace? Contemplating Wiesenthal's moral dilemma, I was struck that the matter of forgiveness is either very simple or it quickly becomes highly complex.

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BACK PAGE

STRONG WEAKNESS

PHIL ROBERTS



FROM NEAR DEATH TO LIVING HOPE

BY WM THOMPSON

Hector Fernandez Avila was 14 years old when he decided to run away from his home in Michoacan, Mexico, to live in the United States.

But before he had the chance to cross the border, he received a phone call that stopped him in his tracks. His father had killed himself. Hector immediately returned home.

"It was the worst day of my life," Hector recalls.

At the time, his hometown was a hub for drug trafficking. Influenced by the drug culture, young Hector admired the worldly trappings of the trade.

"Drug traffickers looked powerful, and I wanted to defend myself," he says. Because he was small for his age, other kids had bullied Hector frequently. His home had offered little refuge; his parents had fought constantly and disciplined Hector harshly.

The day his father died pushed Hector over the edge. Fuelled by rage and grief, he began living a volatile lifestyle. Relatives arranged for Hector

to move to California, hoping a change of scenery would help.

It didn't. In California, his uncle taught him how to sell drugs. Hector joined a gang and quickly earned veteran status. However, his success in the streets came with a painful price.

"Many people were murdered, including my best friends," Hector recalls. At age 17, he feared he would be the next to die. He decided to start

fresh by getting married and leaving the state. "I thought having a family would fix everything," he says. And it did – for a few years.

Hector stopped selling drugs and worked at a factory in Minnesota. He and his wife welcomed a new baby. But as the responsibilities of married life started sinking in, Hector began to second guess his decisions.

The lure of easy money enticed Hector back into drug trafficking. In Minnesota he could sell an ounce of cocaine for \$1,200 – double what it sold for back in California.

Although Hector never used drugs himself, he began abusing alcohol.

On the night of September 6, 2000, Hector celebrated his 23rd birthday by partying with his friends. He drunkenly made a deal to sell a kilogram of cocaine to a man in the next town over. As he drove to the man's house, Hector noticed several state patrol cars trailing him. He started to speed, attempting to flee arrest, but it didn't work.

Hector's incarceration began with a year in Douglas County Jail in Minnesota. He was facing a sentence of up to 40 years in prison.

Hector's wife visited with their children and told him she was leaving him. It was the last time he would ever see them. Hector had lost everything. One day Hector grew so depressed that he planned to end his own life. But before he could complete the deed in his cell, he changed his mind.

"I was afraid that I would get into more trouble if somebody found me alive, so I got down," Hector recalls.

The next day, a pastor in Douglas County named Dave happened to visit Hector.

Grabbing a book, Dave held Hector's hand and said in Spanish, "Hector, I am here to tell you that Jesus loves you."

Immediately Hector began to weep. "I didn't even know what was happening," Hector says. "All I know is I felt a release of something."

Hector started reading the book – a Bible – as soon as he got back into his cell. He loved reading God's Word, but nightmares of his troubled past disrupted his sleep. Frightening images drove Hector to kneel by his bed and pray.

"I made a deal with God. If He made me a new man, then I would serve Him for the rest of my life," Hector recalls.

Hector was sentenced to 96 months in Minnesota Correctional Facility – St Cloud. There he heard about the Prison Fellowship Academy.

Hector saw the Academy as a way to prepare to do the right thing once he left prison.

He applied and was accepted into the program, which required a transfer to a different facility in Lino Lakes, Minnesota.

"It was hard being the only Hispanic [in the program], and I struggled with my English. But the love of Jesus came upon all of us and changed us," Hector says.

In 2005 Hector was released from prison and deported to Mexico. With the help of a re-entry program, Hector enrolled in a seminary in Puebla, Mexico.

After Hector graduated, he worked at an orphanage, where he met and married Esther, a young woman who grew up there.

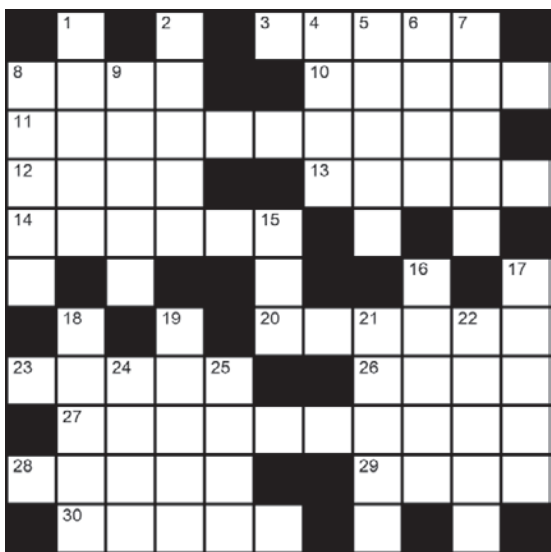
Today Hector and Esther have two children and live in Oaxaca, Mexico. Partnering with a local pastor, the couple is teaching job skills and sharing the hope of Christ with the people of Oaxaca.

Story from Prison Fellowship

“Many people were murdered.”

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- 3 Speak, talk
 - 8 Brewed beverages
 - 10 To quarrel
 - 11 Sewage disposal
 - 12 Battery fluid
 - 13 Fable writer
 - 14 Harbor a grudge
 - 20 Clerical assistant
 - 23 Event you usually sleep through
 - 26 Australian gem
 - 27 Temporary camp, often for troops
 - 28 Relating to ships
 - 29 Boats like Noah's
 - 30 Former capital of Japan

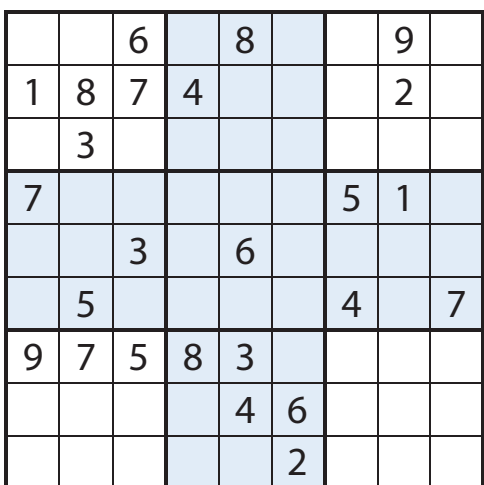


- DOWN**
- 1 Tranquility
 - 2 Onstage whisper
 - 4 "Cheerio!" (2-2)
 - 5 Gave one's best shot
 - 6 These puff up easily
 - 7 Speak at length (3-2)
 - 8 Pre-Soviet rulers
 - 9 Licorice-like flavor
 - 15 Facial twitch, eg
 - 16 Pickled bud used in cooking
 - 17 Boadicea's subjects
 - 18 Opening shot in billiards
 - 19 Chocolate source
 - 21 Julius, for one
 - 22 War machines
 - 24 Grudging resentment
 - 25 Distilling grain

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



"I'm putting out an alert. Our innovative spirit has been reported missing."



Fatherless to found

• From page 1



Torrance with his wife, Alisha.

It started as an angry prayer but he realized that he could also thank God that he had 33 years with his grandmother. Soon that gratitude turned to surrender.

He prayed, "Lord, I'm facing 25 years to life in prison. I don't care what happens with that. I just want to trust You with the rest of my life."

Torrance was sentenced to five years behind bars. He walked in determined to be a model prisoner. Every Sunday, Torrance was in church. On the chaplain's recommendation, Torrance attended the Prison Fellowship Academy, a program that seeks to instill values and build community among participants in order to break the cycle of criminal thinking and create leaders within prison walls. He took courses on criminal addictive behavior and embracing the heavenly Father.

He remembers the day he read Psalm 27:10: "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me." Unlike his earthly father, God had not abandoned Torrance. Torrance continued to grow in his faith upon release. He stayed connected with participants in the Academy program, which helped keep him accountable. He also joined a church and eventually became ordained as the pastor. Torrance married a woman named Alisha, and together they have a blended family with six children. In 2020, they started a construction company and Torrance also began working towards a political science degree.

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

How unforgiveness destroys your heart

• From page 1

The simple side of forgiveness comes from the root meaning of the word... Forgive: to cancel a debt.

At its root, forgiveness really is that simple. When I release another from their debt to me, whether material or emotional, I walk free and full of life – every time. But, if I pause to consider the injustice of the matter, I grow troubled and unsure if forgiveness is the way to go.

Thanks to God and His great grace (undeserved love), the answer to my conflict is settled in Christ...

Justice is His to execute. Forgiveness is mine to extend. A friend used to put it this way: "I take them off my hook and put them on God's."

If forgiveness is not that simple, then it quickly becomes astoundingly complex. The complex side of forgiveness comes from trying to figure out the how, the why, the when, the where, the how far, the how much, the how often... Meanwhile, there is no question as to how important the act of forgiveness is to Jesus of Nazareth. Central to his simple, yet profound, teaching on how to pray, he declares...

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And Jesus then adds: For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Did that last part grab your attention? It should. Seriously. First comes the fortifying promise of God's forgiveness for us when we forgive others. That's God's exercising of justice based on the shed blood of Christ. But then comes the sobering warning of God's necessary judgment on us when we do not forgive others, even as the atoning work of Christ's sacrifice stands. If this is how seriously Jesus deals with forgiveness, how dare we presume to claim the "justice" of what we think is owed to us? LORD, please forgive my trespasses...sure, but against who exactly...?

Psalm 51 gives us the answer: Have mercy on me O God...against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight that you may be found just when you speak, and blameless when you judge. (Psalm 51:1, 4)

The potential complexities of forgiveness are settled when we understand that we are in continual debt to God for His goodness and our inherent rebelliousness against Him. It's called sin, and for it His justice demands His judgment upon us. Yet in Christ, by His blood sacrifice and resurrection life working on our behalf, we can ask the Father, over and over again, to...

Forgive us our trespasses (against you, LORD), as we forgive those who trespass against us. It's really that simple: Know the freedom of release from your debt to God as you release the debt others have to you. All this is accomplished in Christ, and it is ours for the repenting.

As you might pray this today, embrace the core value, according to Jesus... *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

CHASED BY GRACE

BY MICHAEL ASHCRAFT

Right there in the back of the patrol car, Robert Michiels, 20, slipped out of the handcuffs and attempted to hang himself.

"I felt my life slip away," he says on a podcast. "I watched my life flash before me rapid fire in little clips. Everything, from the time I went fishing with my dad and my brother, opening presents on Christmas, climbing up on the roof, riding our bikes, skating in the neighborhood."

Then a loud voice from Heaven pronounced an imperious command. "Stop." So he did. The North Phoenix native was the kid your parents warned you to stay away from. He liked to get into trouble and fell into drugs by age 15.

After drugs reduced him to petty theft and homelessness, and not even his mother would help him anymore, he formed the plan to commit suicide. But first he would get high

one last time. To scrape money together, he stole a pickup truck so he could resell the tires. But when he was stealing the first tire, people shouted and he had to drive off, cursing his luck that he'd only gotten one. As he roared off, a trucker pursued him, talking to the cops as he followed.

Eventually, Robert got cornered. He crashed straight into the pursuing trailer cab and drove off.

Then the first police car showed up and a wild chase ensued through an industrial area and muddy fields.

For the whole 22-minute pursuit, Robert continued smoking his crack pipe. Eventually he slammed into a pole. He woke up smelling of radiator fluid with the engine pushed into him.

Robert credits his limp, drugged up body for his survival. He pulled himself out of the truck and ran down an embankment, into a muddy gully where the police eventually found him.

"The cops had no idea that I almost committed suicide in the back of their car," Robert

says. "They were just glad to have their guy."

The supervisor read Robert his Miranda rights and he was taken to county jail. He figured he could still commit suicide in jail if things were too rough.

"I went to sleep for a month, literally," Robert remembers. "I would just wake up to eat, go to the bathroom, take a shower and then literally just go back to bed. I was coming off drugs."

Robert began reading the Bible. "I had nothing else to do," he says. "I did pray."

He lost every fight he got in, except one. He got early release because he submitted to seven years of probation.

Robert stayed with his mother, found a job at Pizza Hut, and struggled to establish himself and comply with probation. He miraculously got an apartment and his neighbor turned out to be a pastor, who explained the good news of Jesus to Robert and led him in the sinner's prayer (like the one on page 7).

"If you acknowledge and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord [recognizing His power, authority, and majesty as God], and believe in your heart that God raised Him

from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9 AMP) "God bowed the Heavens for me," Robert says. "I went to church and heard some preaching. I literally thought my wife, Erin, had told my life to the pastor."

Robert again responded to an altar call on September 26, 2001, and he began telling everyone what God had done for him. "Everybody I knew I would tell, God is real," he says.

Today, Robert pastors at a church in Santee (San Diego), California.



Robert Michiels with his wife, Erin.

"I felt my life slip away."

"



STOCKPHOTO

Protected for a purpose

Christina (Christy) Steele was in her forties, in prison doing 16-21 years for habitual drug felonies and sick of the life she was living, the abuse and the person she had become.

"I was tired of the lies. When you live a certain type of life, you deal with a certain type of people. I was tired of the way I was living my life. I knew there was a better way," she told *Challenge News* from Anson Correctional Institute, where she has served five years so far.

This better way was one Christy's maternal grandmother and paternal grandparents had known.

"My Pawpaw, a Christian, was the happiest man on earth. So I knew by the joy he had that there was something special in God's Words in the Bible."

Christy also knew there was a God because of the number of times her life had been spared.

"If your life has been anything like mine, you would have to ask, how did I make it through that ... and that ... and that?"

Christy had survived a neglectful mother, abusive relationships, and terrible beatings over many years, as well as her life of drug, alcohol and sex addiction.

She came to the conclusion: "You have to realise that someone is protecting you. Why are they protecting you? Because you have a purpose in life! You don't have to change to be saved. You don't have to be cleaned up.

God does all that for us so He gets the glory."

Wanting happiness like her Pawpaw and knowing that God's way was better than the way of the world, Christy prayed: "Lord Jesus, please forgive me for my sins. I believe that your Son died for me and was raised from the dead and I know that I am saved because your Word tells me that I am and You can't lie."

The Bible says, *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Romans 10:9

The difference becoming a Christian has made for Christy is profound. From being someone who was addicted, jealous, had a bad attitude, was often angry and lied a lot, she now has deep happiness, true friends, love and compassion for others.

"My heart is so big. God has showed me the bigger picture. Also, He has shown me what true love is - to be loved as His child. We don't

change overnight, it takes time and we will fall short, but we keep trying to make a difference in ourselves and others. We can start fresh every day and live in the present, so do what you can with this moment."

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." Ephesians 5:15-17

"How did I make it through that?"

"

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Crosby
Johannesburg
2092

Contact Numbers:
Tel: 011 837 3437
Fax: 011 837 9104

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<p>BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP 1</p> <p><small>Biblical Discipleship</small></p> <p>The lessons in this course will help the student engage the scriptures. This course consists of 4 books: Relationship with God, Fellowship with God, Responsibility to God and Accountability to God. Upon completion of all 4 books, one is issued with a bible in a language of his/her choice, and a certificate.</p>	<p>THE JESUS FILM</p> <p><small>JESUS</small></p> <p>This film which is based on the biography of our Lord Jesus Christ, from birth to His ascension, is screened by a World Hope facilitator as part of our course.</p>
<p>BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP 2</p> <p><small>Biblical Discipleship</small></p> <p>This course builds on the foundation laid by Discipleship 1 and provides a deeper understanding of the word of God in the Christian walk. This course consists of two books A and B, each 13 lessons. A certificate is awarded upon completion of each of the books.</p>	<p>GODS ANSWER TO AIDS</p> <p><small>GODS ANSWER TO AIDS</small></p> <p>The purpose of this course is to enlighten and educate individuals of how to overcome the scourge of HIV/AIDS, based on what the Word of God says. This course consists of six lessons six weeks, engaging a DVD and a resource workbook. It is taught by a World Hope Ministries facilitator.</p>

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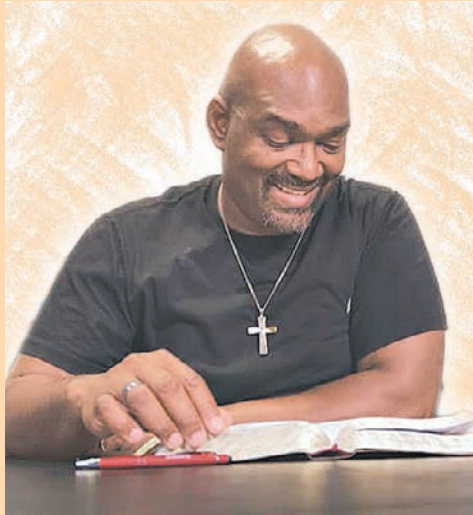
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Marine finds his freedom in prison

BY GRAYSON POPE

When LaDavid Taylor was young, he never felt at home. He was brought up in Dallas by his mother and his stepfather, who was his only father figure from the time he was a toddler.

"The way that he showed love – he always provided, but he didn't talk much... He was a wise man, but we didn't talk much," recalls LaDavid. His mother was young, and she and LaDavid had their issues, too. LaDavid struggled with feeling abandoned and misunderstood, so he tried figuring out life on his own. That didn't go so well.



LaDavid Taylor now lives for something greater than himself.

Getting back on track

"I needed molding; I needed mentoring," he says. As an adolescent, things spiraled downward. "I got into the streets and a lot of foolishness." LaDavid believed in God, but he would often get upset with Him and turn away from Him.

LaDavid knew he needed to get his life together, so he joined the US Marines. He really enjoyed life in the corps – until he hurt his knee, essentially ending his military career.

That sent him into a depression, which he numbed with alcohol. One day he woke up in a Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital. A friend had brought him there after finding him unconscious at home. The doctor told him his liver was damaged. "[He said], 'All it's going to take is for you to drink you a couple more beers, and you'll die,'" LaDavid remembers. "That was it for me."

Determined to get healthy, LaDavid stopped drinking. Unfortunately, the friend who had brought him to the VA was on a different path. The friend started drinking and became aggressive, even taking the keys to LaDavid's car. The two men fought over the keys. The friend had a gun.

After a struggle, LaDavid shot him twice, which led to a sentence of 25 years in prison. He was 24 years old.

Surrendering his will

LaDavid felt the full weight of what he had done. At the end of his own resources, he told God he didn't want to turn away from Him anymore. "[Then God] told me to prove to Him that I love Him," says LaDavid. "And that meant just basically, 'Seek My face in the middle of your darkness.' And I grew from that."

Prison might be a dark place, but LaDavid stayed focused on trying to seek God and to grow in his faith during his sentence.

“Live life for something greater than yourself.”

Hoping to improve himself and prepare for life after his eventual release, LaDavid applied to join the Prison Fellowship Academy.

The Academy uses targeted curriculum, compassionate coaches, and restorative community to replace participants' criminal thinking and behaviors with renewed purpose and biblically-based life principles.

The program helped him to ask the deeper questions and get to the underlying issues that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Living for something greater

One of LaDavid's favorite Academy classes was Alpha, a course facilitated by Prison Fellowship that creates a space where people have conversations about faith, life, and God.

"Alpha took me from head knowledge of my faith with Christ to an intimate knowledge, just through asking questions and being able to evaluate my personal views about my own faith," he says.

While LaDavid was growing as a person, he was also growing as a dad. He signed his children up for Prison Fellowship Angel Tree, a program that serves incarcerated parents by giving them a pathway to restore and strengthen relationships with their children and families.

The year before his release, LaDavid asked his girlfriend – who stuck with him the entire time he was incarcerated – to marry him. She said yes. LaDavid was released in 2018 at 44 years old. He and his family are doing well. LaDavid has since started a janitorial business, and it's prospering.

He also has a role with Alpha's Inner City Initiative in Houston, which allows him to continue with his favorite part of the Academy program – building relationships with groups, local non-profits and churches so that together they can support their community.

The greatest lesson LaDavid learned from his time in the Academy is one he is still practicing today: "Live life for something greater than yourself."

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

SUCCESS CAME AT A COST

A first-generation Puerto Rican American growing up in Milwaukee, Héctor Colón was the target of racism and bullying from a young age. One particular neighbour took an immediate dislike to Héctor and taunted him with a barrage of racial slurs.

When Héctor recounted what happened to his family, his father told him he needed to learn to defend himself and took him to a boxing gym. He was shown some basic combinations by his future coach, who turned to his father and said, "Héctor's a natural. He will become a champion."

Despite having natural talent, Héctor began to train hard. He got up before school to work out, trained during his lunch break and worked even more after school.

Sadly his father never saw him complete as he left their family when Héctor was 12. Héctor continued to endure bullying and racism but, "boxing provided the structure and support I needed. It taught me dedication, determination, and discipline," he writes in an article for *Christianity Today*.

Héctor began representing the United States in boxing around the world. As a teenager, he was a seven-time US national champion. As a senior in high school, he was chosen as a candidate for the 1992 USA Olympic Boxing Team. He also won the F Don Miller Award at the 1992 national championships for skill, respect and determination.

But as his success grew, Héctor noticed other areas of his life were falling away.

"[Boxing] entangled me in some unhealthy relationships," he admits. "Once, at a restaurant, a group of friends and I decided to sprint from the table without paying. The police rounded a few of us up and took us to jail."

When Héctor's coach picked him up, he was furious and reminded him that he "needed to be a cham-

Héctor Colón is now the vice president of the USA Boxing board of directors. INSET: Héctor in his boxing days.



pion both in and out of the ring".

Héctor had been baptized and confirmed in the Catholic Church as a child and continued to attend church even when the rest of his family stopped going, but boxing and travelling led him away.

Héctor dreamed of completing in the Olympics and began preparing for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. In the trials, he lost to Jesse Briseno and was devastated.

“I felt lost, wondering what to do with my life.”

"My dreams of Olympic glory had vanished... I felt lost and rudderless, wondering what to do with my life. That's when I started attending church and Bible studies again, and on December 27, 1992, I purchased my very first Bible. That same day, I gave my life to Jesus Christ."

In 1993, Héctor once again fought Jesse Briseno for the 147-pound US National Championship.

"This time I knocked him out in fewer than two minutes. That victory breathed new life into my career prospects." The fight was televised, and the resulting publicity saw Héctor on the cover of USA Boxing's magazine, as well as the inside cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

Héctor considered going professional but found himself feeling conflicted when he read in the Bible: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who

is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

"I pictured myself in the ring hurting someone who was a temple of the Holy Spirit. I pictured my own temple getting hit and endangering my body and my brain in a way that God had not intended."

Héctor prayed about whether he should continue boxing for about a year. Finally he decided to leave the sport he loved, which he describes as "the hardest decision I had ever made". He knew he was letting many people down, especially his coach.

"When I first gave it up, it was really difficult," Héctor says in an interview with Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

"I would see individuals that I competed with: Oscar De La Hoya, Vernon Forrest. All the greats that ended up becoming world champions, I competed with them on the United States national boxing team. Vernon Forrest – I beat him twice. He became a four-time world champion. Jose Antonio Rivera – I knocked him out; he became a three-time world champion. So giving that up in the very beginning, was really hard. Really hard."

But at the same time, Héctor felt an overwhelming sense of joy and peace and knew he had made the right decision.

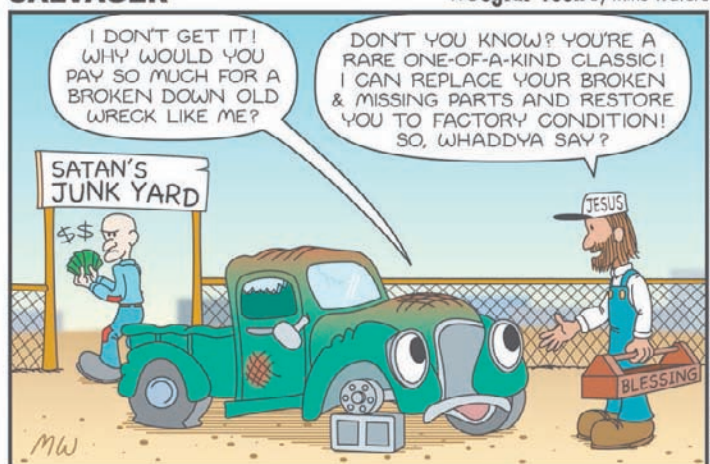
Héctor says leaving the ring enabled him to start a family, pursue God and explore career opportunities that aligned with his faith. Today he is the president of a Lutheran social service organization and the author of *My Journey from Boxing Ring to Boardroom: 5 Essential Virtues for Life and Leadership*.

He remains involved in boxing in his role as the vice president of the USA Boxing board of directors – which may be surprising for some. But Héctor wants to make the sport as safe as possible with rules, training guides and medical advancements.

"I'll always be thankful to boxing for providing character-shaping structure and discipline when I needed it most. But only by giving myself to Christ did I discover a calling worthy of my utmost devotion." •

SALVAGER

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. — LUKE 19:10 NIV



Rescue channel

BY MARGARET CURRAN

MY HUSBAND was fishing and I decided to wander further along the beach. As I rounded the corner I came upon a small stream which meandered through the coasthills and finally flowed into the sea. The water was brown and appeared devoid of life but as I watched I began to see that there was much activity.

Various bugs were busy on the surface and several dragonflies, with a blue streak down their backs, were resting on a reed or flitting to the next spot.

Suddenly I noticed a moving shadow on the bottom of the stream, as a yabbie slowly wended his way along, daintily tucking morsels of food into his mouth as he went. Yes, it certainly was a stream of life and the day all around was full of life with bird calls filling the ear and sunshine and flowers delighting the eye.

But to my right, a disturbance was distracting my attention. Separated from the stream was a shallow pool and as I moved closer I saw it was filled with a frantic, heaving mass of tiny tadpoles. There they were, cut off from the life giving stream, with their water supply getting hotter and shallower every minute as it evaporated in the warm sun. Their doom was certain unless they could be re-connected somehow to the cool waters of the main stream.

I began to burrow in the sand and before long had created a channel between the pool and the stream. As I cut deeper and deeper into the sand, the stream water rushed in and formed a passage between the two, enabling the desperate tadpoles to cross to the safety of the stream. The channel had rescued them from certain death and opened up the way for them to their source of life.

In the Bible God explains to us that the troubles of mankind are caused by the fact that we are living lives that are cut off from our main source of life. Our source of real life – which the Bible calls eternal life – is God Himself. Man became separated from God because of disobedience to Him. The story of Adam and Eve tells us about that and every soul has disobeyed God in some way or another since; except one.

That one perfect person was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because He was the perfect Son of God, He was able to offer Himself to God as a substitute for every helpless sinner.

He became our channel to God when He died on the cross for us. He took the penalty for mankind's sin and died in our place. Now no man need live in a state of separation from God. Christ's sacrifice for us has been accepted by God, who raised Him from the dead to prove it. Now through Him we can return to God.

We are already forgiven.

The channel is already open. We just have to cross over and join that life giving stream of fellowship with God.

Let us thank Him for the wonderful channel He provided in our Lord Jesus Christ and make known to those who still remain separated from, and unaware of it, the life giving love and grace of our great God, and Saviour in Jesus Christ our Lord. ●

Mercy Muzeza



Afrikaans translation

Mercy Muzeza's se lewe was alles oor voorgee. Hierdie 68 jarige Zimbabwiese bloemis onthou hoe sy haar ouers probeer gelukkig hou het deur rol te speel gedurende haar kinderjare.

“My ouers het kerk toe gegaan en hulle het my en my suster forseer om Christene te wees, en ek het net gemaak asof ek een is,” vertel sy vir Challenge.

“Ek was omtrent 10 jaar oud toe ek eers van God hoor, maar dit het vir my niks beteken nie. My kinderdae was nie sleg nie, maar ek was stout.”

Mercy het nie die lewe as gelukkig ervaar nie. Sy sê sy is deur jaloesie, kort humeurigheid, leuens en onvergifnis geteister. Dit was eers nadat sy getroud is en 4 kinders gehad het dat die geloof wat sy vervals het, eers vir haar 'n werklikheid geword het.

Vyf jaar terug het sy “n gelowige van God geword,” deel sy. “Nou wil ek hê dat Jesus in my moet bly en my nooit verlaat nie, en ek wil ook in Hom bly.”

Sy sê dat vandat sy haar lewe aan God toegewy het, is sy “nie meer aan

daardie gewoontes gekoppel nie,” en al haar kinders en haar man het ook hulle lewens aan Jesus Christus toegewy. “Ons sien die hand van God in ons gesin en ons is so gelukkig om Sy kinders te wees.”

Sy deel dat daar groot veranderinge in haar lewe plaasgevind het sedertdien, en sy jubel in Christus. “Ek is veilig in Hom in my daaglikse lewe en ook in die lewe wat nog kom. Ek jubel want ek het die ewige lewe.”

Na sy 'n Christen geword het, het Mercy vir haar plaaslike kerk begin werk, en sy sê dis nie altyd maklik nie. “Mense spot my baie keer en lag agter my rug. Hulle noem my ook name.”

Haar gunsteling Bybelgedeelte, Psalm 23, troos haar gedurende moeilike tye en bevestig dat “die Here is my Herder, en Hy laat my rus in groen weivelde.”

Mercy, 'n Covid-19 oorlewende, vertel dat dit is net deur die genade van God dat sy nog leef. “Jesus het vir my nog 'n kans gegee om te lewe. Ek prys God want meeste van my familie is oorlede.” ●

Zulu translation

Wayephila ngokuzenzisa u Mercy Muzeza. Unemin-yaka ewu 68 waseZimbabwe, uthengisa imbali wayephilela ukujabulisa abazali bakhe.

“Abazali bami babesonta besingenakuzikhethela nodadewethu sifanele siye esontweni, ngazenza ikholwa,” etshela iChallenge.

“Ngangineminyaka elishumi uma ngiqala ukuzwa ngoNkulunkulu okwakungasho lutho kimi. Angikhulanga kabi kodwa nganginalunganga.”

Impilo yayingajabulisi eyaMercy, owakhula enomona, nolaka, amanga kanye nokungathetheleli.

Kwathi eseshadile enezingane ezine lokukholwa ayezenzisa kubo kwaba iqiniso manje.

Eminyakeni emihlanu edlule “waba ikholwa langempela” esitshela. Manje sengifuna uJesu ahlale kimina nami nginamathela kuye.”

Uthi solokhu abuyela kuJesu “akasyiphethe naleyamithwalo”

nabantwana bakhe nomyeni wakhe nabo bazinikele kuJesu Kristu.

“Sibona isandla sikaNkulunkulu emndenini wethu futhi sijabule ukuba abantwana bakhe.”

Usixoxela ukuthi kube “nenguquko enkulu” empilweni yakhe, uthokozile ngoKristu.” Ngiphephile kuYena empilweni yami yonke nakulena ezayo. Ngiyajabula futhi ngoba nginokuphila okungunaphakade.

UMercy, osebenzela ibandla lakubo solokhu aphenduka, uthi akulula neze. “Uba yinhle kisa abantu bahlale bekuhleka. Bekubize nangamagama futhi.”

Kodwa ivesi lakhe alithandayo, iHubo 23 liyamduza kulezonkathi ezinzima, lisho lutho, “UJehova ungumelusi wami, ungilalisa emadlelweni aluhlaza.”

UMercy, osinde ku Covid 19, uthi kungenxa yo musa kaNkulunkulu ephila. UJesu ungiphe elinye ithuba lokuphila. Ngiyambonga uNkulunkulu ngoba izihlobo eziningi zidlulile. ●

English translation

Mercy Muzeza's life was all about pretence. The 68-year-old Zimbabwean florist recalls how her childhood was spent playing a part to keep her parents happy.

“My parents went to church and they forced my sister and me to be Christians, so I just pretended to be,” she tells Challenge News.

“I was about 10 years old when I first heard about God but it did not mean anything to me. My childhood was not bad but I was not good.”

Life was not happy for Mercy, who says she grew up dogged by jealousy, short-tempereness, lying and unforgiveness.

It wasn't until after she got married and had four children that the faith she had faked as a child became real to her.

Five years ago she “became a true believer in God,” she shares. “Now I want Jesus to stay in me and never leave me and I want to stay in Him as well.”

She says that since re-dedicating her life to God she is “no longer connected to those other habits” and that all her children and her husband have also committed their lives to Jesus Christ. “We see God's hand in our family and we are so happy to be His children.”

Sharing that there have been “big changes” in her life since then, she says she rejoices in Christ. “I am safe in Him in my daily life and also in the life to come. I rejoice because I have eternal life.”

Mercy, who worked for her local church after becoming a Christian, says it's not a bed of roses though. “You are always mocked and you have people laughing about you. They call you names as well.”

But her favourite Bible passage, which is Psalm 23, gives her comfort during those tough times, affirming that “the Lord is my Shepherd and He makes me to lie down in green pastures.”

Mercy, a Covid-19 survivor, says it's only by the grace of God that she is still alive. “Jesus gave me another chance to live. I praise God because most of my relatives passed on.” ●

“ ———
I rejoice because I have eternal life.
——— ”

Small beginnings

BY JERRY WILES

WE HEAR a lot these days about the need for more fairness and equality. People often get the idea that their worth or value is based on their salary, possessions, title or position in society. However, God's Kingdom principles are very different.

It is interesting to observe how some of the least educated people often become some of the most fruitful and productive followers of Jesus and agents of change. There certainly is much inequality in the world today. However, it is encouraging to realize that God is an equal opportunity employer. He is no respecter of persons. He uses all of those who come to and believe on Him. As when Jesus multiplied the little boy's loaves and fishes in the story of the feeding of the 5000, so Jesus will multiply your small offering.

Throughout Scripture and history, God has and is using weak and flawed individuals. Samuel Chadwick, late principal of Cliff College in England, has said, “It is this mystery that has filled the history of the Church with anomalies. Inadequate men (and women) are always doing impossible things, and ordinary men achieve extraordinary results. God's biggest things seem to be done by the most unlikely people.”

The Good News of Jesus really is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. If you feel like you have not much to offer God – take heart! He has all you need to do all He calls you to. ●

“The only love that won't disappoint you is one that can't change, that can't be lost, that is not based on the ups and downs of life – or of how well you live. It is something that not even death can take away from you. God's love is the only thing like that.” – Tim Keller

WORDS FOR THE HEART

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Welcome to this Bible Study. Read slowly what I have written. If you have a Bible, look up the reference verses given, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your soul through them. – ALAN BAILEY

John 18:25-19:1-11

INTRODUCTION

WE have been following the Lord's movements in the last week of His life on earth. He has been arrested and tried before Annas, the high priest's father-in-law and now before Caiaphas, the high priest. Meanwhile, Peter is standing around a fire with others, warming himself. He has already once denied knowing Jesus. We take up the story at verse 25.

Verses 25-27 As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "Surely you are not another of His disciples?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with Him in the olive grove?" Again, Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster

began to crow.

The Lord had said to Peter earlier that he would disown Him three times before a rooster crowed. Though Peter had brushed aside the warning, it nevertheless happened. The other three Gospels tell how Peter went out and wept bitterly as he remembered the Lord's words. Peter's courage failed him at the vital time. The other disciples, except John, had gone away to hide.

Verse 28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

It was the Roman governor, Pilate, who had power to execute Jesus. The Jews stayed outside the palace, as by their laws, it would exclude them from celebrating the Passover feast.

Verses 29-32 So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If He were not a criminal," they replied "we

would not have handed Him over to you." Pilate said, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death He was going to die would be fulfilled.

So Pilate appears to see what they want. He senses that they are causing trouble which he wishes to avoid. But the Jews wanted Christ's death and only Rome could do it. The Lord had previously said that He would be "lifted up from the earth" which would happen with crucifixion, but not with the Jews' method of execution, which was stoning.

Verses 33-36 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea?" Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Do you think I am a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

This conversation shows that Pilate had no idea who Jesus was or what He stood for. He had simply no interest in Jewish affairs of this kind. But what Jesus is saying mystifies him even more. A kingdom of another kind in another place is baffling.

Verses 37, 38 "You are a king then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."

Obviously, Pilate is out of his depth. His sceptical words "What is truth?" show his lack of any moral conviction. In our time, many ask the same question as if truth cannot be known with final certainty. Yet in front of Pilate was the one who said, "I am the Truth." This is surely the test for any belief or ideology—is it true?

Verses 39, 40 "But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews?'" They shouted back, "No, not Him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion.

It is clear that Pilate wanted to release Jesus and end this trial. So, he hopes to appease the crowd and set Jesus free. But this is not what the Jews wanted. Instead, they asked for the release of a criminal, one who had rebelled against Rome. We could say this is a typical choice of sinners—a murderer instead of the Son of God!

Ch 19: verses 1-3 Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They clothed Him in a purple robe and went up to Him again and again, saying, "Hail, O king of the Jews!" And they struck Him in the face.



Before Jesus was crucified, soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head and clothed Him in a purple robe.

"We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God."

The suggestion that they take Him and crucify Him, Pilate knows to be groundless. He can only be crucified by Rome's orders. But now, at last, the Jews state their case against Jesus. His claim to be Son of God and all that meant, they regarded as blasphemy. The claim infers equality with God. So as

unbelievers they had jumped to the conclusion that He was an imposter.

Verses 8-11 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You have no power over me that was not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

Pilate is floundering now, knowing that here is someone very different, someone he has no idea how to handle. Even his power as governor is no help to him. He is out of his depth.

CONCLUSION

Every reader of these words is on one side or the other in this conflict. Either standing with the lone figure of Jesus, or with the angry crowd. The choice has always been there. To yield to God and His will, or to rebel and go our own way. Remember Jesus said, "All who are on the side of truth listen to me." Are we on His side? The crucifixion is looming as this trial draws to a close. Pilate is worn down by the opposition.

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HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

What? Salvation is an eternal relationship with God – now on Earth and, after we die, in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:47

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Who? Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Why? Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Roman 3:23

How? The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8b-10

Ready to change your life forever? Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude – which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,

I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.

Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn't, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank You that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You – I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a fellow prisoner who is a Christian, or your Prison Chaplain.
2. Ask a friend or family member to bring you a Bible. Ask the Prison Chaplain to sign you up to a correspondence discipleship program.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Find out if your prison has church services and attend them regularly.

AS A NEXT STEP:

I have prayed this prayer.

- Please send me:
- Bible portion
 - Some 'starting off' literature
 - Information on a helpful church

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

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Out of South Africa enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

The power of gratitude

IN his article, "Gratitude: The Brain's Amazing Fertilizer," author Charles Stone documents scientifically-proven physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of practicing gratitude. His research in neuroscience is fascinating. He writes that there's a tonne of



research that says having an attitude of gratitude gives you more energy. For example, in a research study one group of participants kept a journal listing things for which they were grateful. A second group recorded what annoyed them. People in the first group reported feeling more energetic and happier than the second group. Charles lists other benefits. Grateful people are more other-centred and willing to help people, and that gives them a greater sense of significance and completeness. They sleep more deeply. They feel better physically. They have less anxiety.

All that's pretty amazing, isn't it? Then there's the fact about how our brains are wired. Did you know the human brain has five times more negative circuits than positive ones? It's called "negative bias". That's why it's much easier to be negative than positive. Or perhaps we should say, it's much harder to be positive.

Practicing gratitude forces our minds to focus on the positive, which actually rewires our brains. Maybe that's why the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8: "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy – dwell on these things." He also encouraged the Thessalonians: "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

From author, CEO and pastor Chip Ingram in an article from Joy! Magazine, October 2022



STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

In 2017, Sheffield policeman Phil Roberts was crowned Britain's Strongest Man.

Winning this competition was no mean feat. The 32-year-old had to beat his opponents in events such as flipping a 400 kg tractor tyre, lifting a car and pulling a plane. At 1.9 metres tall and weighing 133 kg, he was built like a mountain.

Yet while he was as physically as strong as they came, emotionally Phil was as weak as a child.

"It looked on the outside that I had everything, but I didn't feel fulfilled," he says on the YouTube channel Life Stories. "I felt empty."

Emptiness had plagued him ever since he was 22, when his best friend hanged himself. Until then Phil had been a casual churchgoer, but this tragedy caused him to turn his back on God.

"I couldn't understand how a good God could allow that to happen and that's when I decided I was done with God and would live my life my way to the full — or at least what I thought was to the full," he says. "I can't say I'm proud of the next 13 years."

Those were the party years, the hard drugs (cocaine, heroin, lots of steroids) and hard drinking years. He even got engaged and bought a house with his fiancée but was unfaithful to her and they broke up.

By this time Phil was a police officer, but had become disillusioned with the job and chalked up the most complaints of anyone in

the South Yorkshire Police Force.

Where did it go wrong, he asked himself? "I went from wanting to help and protect the vulnerable to being one of the most violent men in the force. I left a trail of disaster behind me and slipped into depression."

Phil tried to pick himself up by throwing himself into weight training and competing in novice strongman competitions.

Bolstered by some early victories, he went all out to win the major titles, which resulted in his 2017 win. This launched him into the glamorous world of women, sports cars, penthouse apartments and lucrative sponsorship deals.

But still this brought him no lasting joy — instead he describes his success as hollow. His use of hard drugs, which included copious amounts of steroids, continued.

In 2019, Phil decided to defend his title. By this time, he weighed 152 kg.

"I was having the worst competition I've ever had. I was so big and so uncomfortable because I put on that weight very quickly.

"The steroids and recreational drugs I was taking put my body under huge pressure — it's by the grace of God that I didn't just pop."

The last event of the competition rolled around — the Atlas stone lift, in which competitors have to lift five huge round stones, increasing in weight from 100 to 160 kg, and place them on five high platforms.

He got through the first four but

slipped while lifting the final and heaviest stone. It dropped. The 160 kg rock crashed onto Phil's shin bone, which broke with a sickening crack.

"I knew instantly it was bad," he says. "It sounded like a massive branch breaking off a tree."

When surgeons told him his injuries were so severe he could lose his leg, Phil's world disintegrated.

"I went from being one of the strongest people on earth to the vulnerable little boy I was growing up. I was terrified," he shares.

"All I could think of was that I would lose my business and my livelihood. I realised everything I'd built my life on, things that never gave me real happiness or joy in the first place, could vanish overnight."

However, Phil had some friends who were Christians. They reached out to him during this time and invited him to a Christian men's retreat.

"At that point I was so desperate I said I'd take anything, so I went, but this time I wasn't my confident cocky self. I was in pain; my leg was being held together by this massive cage. I was miserable."

While he was there, one of the speakers approached Phil and said to him: "Why don't you give this God thing a go? Give Jesus a chance."

Willing to try anything, he said to himself: "Yeah, why not give Jesus a go?" It really was as casual as that!

He says slowly but surely things started to change. "I didn't know

much about God at all. I thought He was cruel and Jesus was just some kind of nice guy.

"I knew I had to change — I wanted to change — but I was kind of straddling the Christian life and the old life. But God was so gracious; He was so patient. He gave me grace [undeserved love]. He is a loving father, the best Father ever.

"I can genuinely say today that on reflection the day of the accident was the best day of my life, though not at the time, of course. But it was when I realised that all these things that you've spent so much time and effort on can be taken away from you in an instant.

"God has given me the purpose and meaning I've always looked for."

Right: Phil Roberts doing the Atlas stone lift.



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WORLD HOPE MINISTRIES
SOUTH AFRICA

106 NURNEY AVE, CROSBY, JHB
P.O. BOX 96176
BRIXTON 2019

(T) 2711 837 3437
(F) 2711 837 9104

Rev. Willie Dengler
E-mail: mbcchurch@icon.co.za