

When my mother came to visit me in the jail, tears filled her eyes. Little Billy was jumping up and down on her lap, pressing his nose against the glass partition.

“Phyllis, I haven’t seen you like this in years,” my mother said. “Your face is glowing. You used to look like death most of the time. I can’t quite explain it; you just look so... alive, so different!”

Mom wept and so did I. “I don’t know how to explain it either, Mom. I only know that God has healed me and that I’m never going back to that hell again.”

#### **Blissings in jail**

God blessed my time at the jail. Soon several women scrounged up Bibles. At night after supper we’d sit on the floor between bunks to read the Bible and sing.

On the weekend I attended church service given by the men’s chaplain. Afterward I ran up to him and asked, “Can you please tell me the name of the lady that works here? I need to thank her for the incredible way she’s helped me.”

He looked at me through his spectacles. “I’m sorry young lady, but I haven’t had any help here for over ten years.

The next day, determined to find the lady, I checked with the desk sergeants on every shift. The answer was always the same: “We don’t show anybody fitting that description. If she came in here, she’d be in the computer.”

That night, with my hopes dampened, I prayed, “God what’s going on here? I’ve done everything I know to do.”

I flipped open my Bible and started reading about Peter in prison. An angel set him free but he didn’t realize it until he was walking down the street, a free man. I then understood that God had sent a messenger to me to point me to freedom.

#### **A lasting freedom**

It was hard to leave those women behind when my release date finally arrived, but at least they had their Bibles. The Bible I had read was still in the drawer by my old bed, waiting for the woman who would take my place.

God made sure I survived my brushes with death so I could come to know Him. He has given me a wonderful husband and family to fulfill the love I’d hungered for. I don’t have to sell my body to survive. Instead I live in God’s unconditional love for me, telling others what He’s done in my life. Because of this I find new treasures, new adventures, and new strength to face tomorrow.

**If we can help you please contact us at:  
delessons.org/contact**

(Tract #39)

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# The Unhappy Hooker

The rumble of traffic was deafening. Dust and exhaust fumes stung my eyes as I leaned against a telephone pole. Four o’clock on Tuesday afternoon; I hadn’t had a bath in days.

If I don’t get a trick soon, I thought, I’ll be a dead duck.

At age 19, I was already hopelessly strung out on heroin. My family had all but deserted me. I was the world’s worst hooker.

“Oh God, how did I get here?” I moaned. I was determined not to cry, because my little boy, Billy, was probably at home crying his heart out right now. Paul, my pimp/husband, would kill me or at least try to if I didn’t bring home some money.

“Oh God, please help me!” I fought back the tears and planted myself on a nearby bus stop bench. As the sun went down, I felt the cold sweats coming on. I needed some dope soon or I wouldn’t be able to work at all. This was the common predicament: Get a fix so you could get out on the streets to sell your body to get another fix. The problem was that it invariably got worse, never better. With all the hazards — the cops, the nuts, the occasional rip-off — life was not worth living. It wasn’t worth dying for either.

#### **Losing faith**

As a child, I learned to love God and the Bible, but somewhere along the way I got lost and turned to drugs. It broke my father’s heart when I married Paul, a junkie from New York City. After two years of marriage, hopeless poverty, and the birth of my son, he walked out on us.

I decided to turn my son over to my parents and try to kick heroin. I went to drug treatment programs, recovery homes, hospitals, and psychiatrists. Nothing helped. I desperately wanted to change but couldn’t find anyone or anything to help me.

#### **Hopelessness**

In this hopeless state I shot more dope to ease the guilt and pain. Often I’d go to bed in some cheap motel room, hoping to die during the night. That way I wouldn’t have to face another day on the streets trying to sell myself for another fix.

I overdosed many times, but by some miracle my life was spared. Paul used his fists on me as a motivational tactic. I suffered from severe malnutrition. Infections roared through my body from using dirty needles. Still, I survived.

Once when I was with some acquaintances on a drug run, our Volkswagen was broadsided by a big Ford Rancho. I was knocked unconscious and all my friends had broken bones. The passenger in the front seat was crushed almost to death, while I suffered only a skinned knee. Why was I still alive?

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### Partners in pain

One day while in another drug recovery house, I met Patrick. He strengthened me with the love I had so hungered for, but he too was a slave to drugs. For thirteen years we struggled together to free ourselves from addiction. In and out of prisons, from one treatment to another, we would always find ourselves worse off than before.

The night Patrick was released from San Quentin we holed ourselves up in a ratty hotel, shooting heroin and cocaine. For some reason Patrick began telling me how he had read the entire Bible while doing his time. Then after a long silence he looked at me with an unusual light in his eyes. "I'm gonna see my Lord. I'm gonna walk hand-in-hand with Jesus."

I considered his sunken face and his gaunt frame. His eyes were deep blue pools of misery. But somewhere deep down inside I felt a tiny glimmer of hope.

### Busted

A loud slamming split the silence. Two cops busted down the door, handcuffed us, and took us off to jail.

The jail was cold and crowded. I stood for hours in a holding cell filled with smoking, spitting, angry females. Eventually I was assigned to a dormitory and a bunk.

Days later I got a phone call. The voice on the other end said, "Patrick was released from jail two days ago. This morning the police found him dead down by a creek with a needle still in his arm."

My knees buckled; I went into shock.

### A voice from the gloom

I don't remember being released from jail. I found myself walking the streets again, confused and desperate. My clothes were wrinkled and dirty; I had lost my shoes somewhere.

I was mad. I raced to consume as much dope as I could, but couldn't seem to kill the pain anymore. My heart turned to stone as I drove myself to make more money. One evening I came across a silver Porsche. The driver was drunk, so I stole the money in his pockets. Counting hundred dollar bills, I told myself, Tomorrow I'm gonna get me a real good fix.

At midnight I knocked on a friend's door, begging shelter for the night. A voice from behind the door yelled, "Go away! We don't want you around here anymore!"

I walked down the dark street alone, my bare feet slapping the pavement.

Then from behind me I heard a voice call my name: "Phyllis, I'm going to save you."

I turned to look, but in the gloom I saw no one.

### A revolving door

I spent the night in a sleeping bag down by the creek. When the sun broke through the trees the next morning, I was already on my way back from the connection's house across the freeway. From the overpass I spied the burnt-out wreck of an old Volkswagen in the vacant lot below. Pat and I had often gone there to fix.

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I climbed through the hole in the fence, pushed my way through the bushes, and climbed into the car. The sun beat down on the dusty windshield as the aroma of cooking heroin filled my head. My hands shook as I drew up the dope into the syringe. "I wonder what it's like to die?" I whispered.

Poising the needle over a good vein, I suddenly found myself being throttled by a big arm. The cop dragged me kicking and screaming from the car. My last fix fell into the dirt.

From the back seat of the patrol car, I watched those shabby streets pass by, one by one. The name of Jesus brushed across my lips.

### The Book

In the dorm I braced myself for weeks of sleepless agony. Opening the drawer of a metal locker near my bed, I found an old beat-up Bible. I pulled it out and tried to read, but my anxiety was mounting. I was so weak from not getting a fix. Disgusting scenes flooded my mind: my mother's disappointment, my father, and my little boy. All those people I had hurt....

Anguish ripped deep into my heart. I remembered how I had loved the Bible as a child, but nothing made any sense at all. I began to cry.

### The messenger

I knew that somehow this old Book held my answer, but bitter tears clouded my vision. My heart ached with every breath. "Oh God, what have I done?"

When I looked up, a lady was standing at the foot of my bed. I guessed she was a chaplain. She never said a word as she approached me and reached for my Bible. I handed it to her, apologizing for the mess I'd made of it. She took it from my hands and silently turned the pages. Then, she placed it gently back on my pillow, laying her finger on Psalm 40.

I began to read:

I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth— praise to our God; many shall see it and fear, and will put their trust in the LORD (Psalm 40:1-3, NKJV).

### The miracle

I don't know what happened after that. I didn't see the woman go. I only know that the next morning I awoke from a deep, peaceful sleep. I was totally healed — no pain. I felt amazing vitality in my body. The tormenting blackness of over 15 years of heroin addiction was gone. What so many doctors, psychiatrists, and treatments could not cure, God healed in a moment.

I was ecstatic. "God, thank You! I love You. I'm so sorry for being such a horrible person. Please God, if You can forgive me, I'll make it up to You somehow. I'll tell the world what You've done for me."

From that moment, I immersed myself in the Bible. God became my closest friend. If I wasn't talking to Him, I was telling anyone who would listen about how He set me free.

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