

of love and contentment came over me, and I knew God would protect me no matter what. I was told I was a good candidate for probation or community corrections, and if I did do time, it would be five to eight years. When I returned to my cell an hour after being sentenced to sixteen years, I was on my knees thanking my heavenly Father for the opportunity to serve Him because I knew it was all part of His plan for me.

Now, a couple of years into my sentence, my relationship with the Father grows stronger every day. I used to be imprisoned by sin, facing sure death. God has set me free, and now I can look forward to eternal life with Christ Jesus no matter where I am.

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Only Fooling Myself

The Patrick Catanach Story

Someone once said that in order to get an old mule's attention, you sometimes have to smack him upside the head with a two-by-four. The razor wire that surrounds this place, the steel bars on the windows, and the green uniform I wear are God's two-by-fours for me.

Thirty or so years ago, I got caught up in the "Jesus movement." I accepted Jesus into my life, and that started the religious roller coaster ride. I attended some Bible studies and would stop off for a cold drink on the

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way home. I would read the Bible at home then smoke a joint. On my way home from work, I would go to a topless bar, drink, smoke, and lust after the dancers. I might have accepted Jesus, but I was unwilling to give up my vices. When things didn't go in my favor, and when my marriage started to fall apart, I would get angry at God: "I go to church, I read the Bible. Why don't you help me!" I realize now that in those days, I knew about Jesus but didn't know Jesus.

I started smoking weed in 1966 when I was in Vietnam. I ended up smoking every day for the next thirty-five years. I smoked so I could do my job, to ease the guilt of my infidelity, and to cope with life. In the 1980s, I got involved with a church but didn't stop my drug use or promiscuity. I would show up some mornings stoned. I started doing cocaine more often, along with hash,

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mushrooms, and alcohol. I had also become obsessed with pornography and spent a lot of time frequenting adult bookstores. There were a few times when my activities almost got me killed or arrested. It was at those times that I would make a deal with God: "Get me out of this, and I'll never do it again." In a short time, I would be back to my old habits.

In 2001, while under the influence, I made a bad decision that led to my present situation. While I was in jail I signed up for every program just to get out of the cell. One of the programs happened to be a Bible study. After a few weeks, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and I rededicated my life to God. I asked for forgiveness for hurting so many people in my life, especially my wife. I promised Father God that I would serve Him no matter what my situation might be. A feeling

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