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**“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission**  
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**Daily Devotional**

*“The Dispenser” – Jim Connelly*

ANNCR: July 15<sup>th</sup>, “The Dispenser.” Did you ever have that friend who only seemed to come around when they needed something? But as soon as you helped them through their scrape, they kind of disappeared. And you couldn’t help but wonder, is this really a friendship? In a similar way, God is often pushed to the side until we have a need, and then, he becomes our go-to guy. Today we’ll meet a man who thought himself pretty self-sufficient, with God in tow just to help him out in a pinch. He’s here to share with us his true story, beginning with his near-death experiences, on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

JIM: I’m Jim Connelly. The first time was in Vietnam when I was a 19-year-old Marine on a barren hill surrounded by VC in the jungle lobbing mortars at us. I survived Nam to attend church every Sunday in Chicago; but the ritual bored me, and I soon forgot about the God who protected me.

I married and, to my wife’s dismay, became a fireman. Once again I faced death in a high-rise fire where I became disoriented from

smoke and couldn't find my way out. Crawling along the floor, I cried out to God again to save me, and He did, leading me to the right door. I told no one about my close call, not even my wife.

After our daughters were born, I wanted to become rich and got into rehabbing houses on my days off. As I worked, I listened to the radio and heard different preachers talk about Jesus — truth I'd never heard before in church. I always thought I was saved because I was a member of the church; but if I had died in Vietnam — or fighting fires — I would have gone to hell! Seven times I read Revelation and attended a Christian firefighters meeting.

Still searching, I began attending a different church and a Bible study. The gospel was sinking into my hungry soul. After I saw a movie about Christ and the crucifixion, I finally understood His wonderful plan of salvation; and God's love engulfed me. I was forgiven for my sins! I was born again! I had been living for myself — for money and things, but nothing compares with knowing Jesus.

ANNCR: The prophet Micah spoke to the rebellious nation of Israel in Micah chapter 6, verse 8, saying, "*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*" Friend, much of the Old

Testament records a cycle of God's people following their own way, receiving punishment, and crying out to God to save them from their trouble. And our current condition can look very much the same. But God desires more. He does not want to serve as our "get out of jail free card," and he will not be mocked in this way. Instead, he deserves our full devotion and will settle for nothing less. So, will you examine your relationship with God today?

CREDITS: Unshackled Daily Devotionals are produced by Pacific Garden Mission along with our Unshackled Audio Dramas. To find even more true stories of God's saving, transforming power, visit our website, [unshackled.org](http://unshackled.org).

This episode was written by Kennetha Gaebler and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and David Mink.

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