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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“The Tool Of Adversity” – Ervin Williams

ANNCR: January 10th, “The Tool Of Adversity.” Have you ever known someone with a chip on their shoulder? They’re the person with a prideful, gruff air about them that’s developed out of adversity. The truth is, we’ve all establish our own forms of protection from past hurts. And if we’re not careful, this protection can work against us – weighing on us, isolating us...driving us away from God. But what if God wants to use our adversity for a positive outcome? Ervin Williams has something to say about that, as he’s here to share with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

ERVIN: My mother was only fourteen when I was born, the oldest of thirteen children. We lived in every square inch of our four-room house. I hardly knew my dad who left early on. When my step-dad left, Mom went on welfare. She spent more and more time away from home, leaving me in charge, so grudgingly, I became the leader. But Mom taught me to read before I went to school, and I got straight A’s through sixth grade.

Then I went to an all-white school where I didn't fit in and the kids made fun of me. I began to hate school. In high school I joined revolutionary groups, but I also started a community action program that led to a good job when I graduated, traveling the country. Success went to my head, and I dropped out of college, dodging the Vietnam War draft until I was threatened with prison.

The army toughened me, and that's where I met Marilyn. I didn't want to leave her to go overseas, so I went AWOL. After I turned myself in and spent time in the stockade, the army let me go. Marilyn and I eventually married, but our baby son's death at birth stirred the anger again, and I turned to drugs, even selling them. My pride squandered all of my potential.

Ulcers put me in the hospital where a minister came every day to share God's love and grace with me. When I finally prayed and gave my life to Christ, peace came into my troubled heart. My wife followed me to the cross, and today we serve our risen Lord in a ministry that reaches out to the poor and hurting people.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul speaks of the hope we have in Jesus in Romans chapter 5. Picking up in verse 3, he says, *"...we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience,*

experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed;
because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost
which is given unto us.” Friend, every one of us is promised pain in this life. It’s part of living in a sinful world. But God will turn our heartache into tools for strength and righteousness if we’ll only let Him. But we have to run to Him, not from Him, in our pain. We have to surrender our own desires, trust Him, and glorify Him through the trials. Here, as the verse says, we’ll never be put to shame. Will you receive this truth 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.

This episode was written by Huey Freeman and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Ryan Priester.

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