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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“Dead Or Alive” – Billy Stevenson

ANNCR: January 16th, “Dead or Alive.” Are you familiar with the phrase “a dead ringer?” When we use this expression, we mean to say that two things look exactly alike. Theories developed as to the origin of this phrase, and for a while it was thought to come from an old burying ritual. In the past, people who seemed dead were often fastened to a bell before their burial. This way, if they’d been buried prematurely, they could ring the bell and be rescued. At times, the differences between someone who was dead and someone who was alive were indistinguishable. While modern medicine’s brought us a long way, we can still suffer from a similar problem today. We’re going to meet Billy, a man who didn’t know, himself, if he was dead or alive...until he learned what being alive truly meant. He’s here to share with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

BILLY: I was determined to try all the evil the world had to offer. I joined the army at eighteen, was booted out for going AWOL. I was a drunken gambler when I got married, I couldn’t even hold a job. Then the “troubles” started in my homeland — gunfire and explosions.

Whenever violence erupted, my wife never knew if I was dead or alive because I was gone most of the time.

I drove a lorry of liquid oxygen and had many a close call with terrorists who wanted to sabotage my cargo. One day, my children found a box of antique gold coins worth a hundred thousand dollars. Bystanders took most of the coins, leaving us with only twenty, most of which I spent at the bars. I simply couldn't control me drinking until it finally landed me in the hospital.

My sister sent her pastor to visit me, and he explained my need for Christ. But I wasn't ready for salvation. The pastor came to our house and took us to a gospel meeting where my wife was saved. Then one night I saw my six-year-old son on his knees, praying for me. He said, "Please, God, don't let me daddy go to hell." I went to my room, fell on the floor, confessed my hopeless condition and gave my life to Christ. I'm Billy Stevenson and that was many years ago now. I've been an evangelist ever since, telling the world that Jesus will set you free.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 6, verse 11, "*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Friend, Billy discovered that he was

dead. And when he admitted this, He was given new life! As believers, we're now alive! But when we give in to sin and follow our selfish desires, we're living as though we're still dead. We have all the distinguishing features of someone who's ready for burial – continued separation from God. So, don't allow this case of mistaken identity. Rather, will you live in this truth today?

CREIDTS: 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 Jack Odell and Elizabeth Kupfershmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Tony Mockus.

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