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

*“A New Definition” – Paul Wright*

ANNCR: April 17<sup>th</sup>, “A New Definition.” Do you feel defined by a particular moment in your life? Maybe you had a certain experience that continues to influence who you are and how you see yourself today. Could it have been setting records on your high school sports team? Earning your doctorate? Or serving in an underdeveloped country on a mission of mercy? Such experiences can create power moments that change our life for the better. But there is danger in letting our situations determine our identity. For just as positive moments can redefine us, if we are not careful, negative experiences can have the same effect – as Paul Wright learned. One rebellious night altered the trajectory of Paul’s life, but he’s here now to share with us his true story on today’s Unshackled Daily Devotional.

PAUL: In college drinking was expected along with stupid pranks. And one night some buddies woke me up to go get some beer. Everything was closed, so we broke into a liquor store and got caught. I spent 20 days in jail, made restitution, was fined and released. But I was so ashamed I couldn’t face people for three months. I quit college

and joined the army. After basic training I married my school sweetheart.

My drinking increased in the army along with fighting. When I was discharged, my wife's father brought me into his auto parts business, and our life was fairly stable. Things changed when our daughter rebelled against going to church because I didn't go. My wife insisted that I go, too. Then we were invited to a church retreat for the weekend. The speaker seemed to have only one subject — Jesus Christ. I was astonished to realize that the Creator of the universe humbled himself, became a man and died for our sins so we could become children of God. My wife and I pondered these things on the three hour drive home.

A month later the church asked me to speak about the retreat, and I prayed, asking God's help. I realized that my trust was in Christ Jesus alone — and I received His free gift of salvation. Since then I have never stopped speaking about God's salvation.

ANNCR: Hebrews chapter 2, verse 11 says, *“Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”* Friend, Paul found himself crippled by his sin because he had no definition for himself

outside his own behavior – for better or for worse. And if we do not keep our eye firmly on the truth – that God’s love for us and our adoption into His family is our identity – then we, even as Christians, will fall into this same trap. It is only by faith in Jesus that we can humbly accept our victories and admit to our wrongs, continuing each moment in our pursuit of holiness. 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](http://unshackled.org).

This episode was written by Jack Odell and Elizabeth Kupfershmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Guy Barile.

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