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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“Hard-Earned Pride” – Thomas Couch

ANNCR: February 27th, “Hard-Earned Pride.” Would you consider yourself a daredevil – the person willing to put yourself in precarious situations for the sake of hype and thrills? Of course there’s risk involved, but what’s life without a few scars, right? And once you’ve obtained those scars, the fun part’s showing them off and telling others how you got them! On the other hand, maybe this isn’t you. Maybe you’re more cautious, spending most of your time trying not to get hurt. But when injuries happen, as they do, your “survival” story feels even more hard-earned. Your scars weren’t something you’d asked for, but now they’re a testament to the challenges you’ve endured. Life often feels similar to this. We try not to get hurt, but we can easily develop a sense of pride from the heartache we’ve experienced. Maybe no one knows this better than Tom Couch, the man we’ll meet today. When he was a boy, Tom’s family slept in his grandfather’s barn because they were so poor, but the trials only grew worse from there. Tom’s here to share with you his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

TOM: I was four when our mom left us, and we kids were put in foster care homes and then an orphanage. Four years later Dad took us home. He was a changed man, peaceful, hard-working. Shortly after that, he was killed on the job. I sat in the funeral home and listened as a man described his death, and I wondered why God let my daddy die like that.

Grandma took us in, but she was old and strict, and made us work hard. She also took us to church. One day a girl I cared about went forward for salvation, and I followed, for all the wrong motives. For six months I was too proud to confess my false profession of faith. Then I talked with the pastor who led me in a *sincere* prayer of repentance.

Even so I held bitterness in my soul for the heartache I'd endured. That bitterness shadowed me to Bible college where many kind people helped me understand God's ways and His goodness. I've learned through the years that God uses our trials to strengthen our faith and to enable us to help others.

ANNCR: James wrote to the early believers in James chapter 4, commanding them to submit to God. In verse 6 he says, "***But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but***

giveth grace unto the humble.” Friend, when we take pride in the hardships and bitter struggles we’ve survived, what we’re doing is actually trusting in ourselves and shutting the door on God. Instead, if we acknowledge that God is the one who can make a way for us through the pain, and we turn to him in humility, He will restore and uplift us. But we must always remember that pride is our downfall...even if it feels hard-earned. 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 Jack Odell and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and John Green.

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