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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“Trying To Reform” – Ramon Johnson

ANNCR: June 30th, “Trying To Reform.” How many resolutions have you made in your life? ...how many have you followed through with? The truth is, our ambitions are often bigger than our abilities. Whether we declare our resolution proudly on the final day of a church retreat, or mutter it under our breath as we reached for that last doughnut, we make promises to ourselves all the time. We want to improve, and we try adopting healthier practices and making better decisions. But the determination to change usually washes over us after we’ve hit a low point. “I can’t come back here again,” we say to ourselves. “I won’t let it happen.” Sound familiar? Today we’ll meet Ramon Johnson, a man who was determined to set himself straight...again and again and again. He’s here to share with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

RAMON: A cousin said I was square. He said I should smoke and be cool. Then I decided to go live with my father and made secret plans to leave. Mom tried to stop me, so I ran away to Dad. I learned to drink there. A year later I moved back to Mom’s but couldn’t seem to settle down.

After graduation, I worked and started college, then quit to join the Air Force. I got into drugs and almost died from an overdose. I tried to reform by singing in the church choir. I even prayed for salvation but didn't change. My work began to suffer, and I was not allowed to re-enlist.

Back home I landed a good job with the Post Office. Then I shattered my leg playing football and was so depressed I went back to booze. My life was a see-saw of reform and failure. I received a large settlement from a car accident, then spent it on drugs. I lost everything and went back to Mom's.

One night a drug dealer almost beat me to death. When I was well enough, I went to my dad's place. Some Christians came to the door one night and explained that Christ died for my sins and accepting Him as Savior was my only hope. I prayed with them, and my life changed forever. The Bible says it is not for man to direct his steps. I needed Christ in my heart to overcome temptation. God had a purpose for my life, and now I follow Him.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul encouraged the believers in 2 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 8, *“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all*

things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” Friend, we cannot resolve our way into being a better person. Contrary to many self-help philosophies, we do not have the strength within ourselves to reform. On our own, we will continue in cycles of failure each time our determination wears thin. It is God Himself who gives us the strength to follow Him. Will you seek His help 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 Kennetha Gaebler and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Jim Jackson.

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