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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“The Changing Factor” – James Holland

ANNCR: May 1st, “The Changing Factor.” Have you ever found yourself in a bad scrape that you knew you’d brought on yourself? We all have. At one time or another, we’ve had to face the painful result of our own poor decisions. And this consequence, too great to endure alone, can drive us closer to God and others in search of help. But what exactly do we do with the help we receive? Does it simply propel us further down our crooked path? Or does it cause us to examine our choices, acknowledge our faults, and seek a better route? Today we’ll meet James, a man who was determined to follow his own way, even as he leaned on the help of others. Until he humbled himself before the Truth. James is here to share with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

JAMES: My troubles really started when I joined the Air Force and began drinking with a buddy. I did crazy things, like wearing an officer’s rank for which I was court-martialed. When a drunken sergeant and I broke into the base shoe store, I received an undesirable discharge.

My family gave up on me, and I ended up on Skid Row. Then I learned to ride the rails around the country, staying at rescue missions where I often feigned salvation to get special privileges. But my mind was closed to the gospel. I was locked up repeatedly, but my worst offense was stealing a Treasury Department check and trying to cash it. I spent three years in Leavenworth for that. During bouts of sobriety afterward, I managed to get my college degree, then a Masters degree in sociology.

On my job as a social worker, one of my clients loved the Lord and asked me to read verses from the Bible. As I read of God's love and the sacrifice of His Son for our sins, my heart softened. I prayed to receive Christ that day. I had come to help *her*, but she helped *me* to find new life in Christ. Jesus set me free of the sins that kept me in bondage for so many years. I'm James Holland, and today I have a wife and a ministry to nursing homes and jails.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul describes the gift Christians have received in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. He says in verse 18, ***“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*** Friend, through Jesus' sacrifice, God's granted us intimacy with Him. And this relationship is meant to change us! Jesus didn't

sacrifice Himself so He could leave us on our own path. Rather, He's offered us help that can transform us. But it will have no effect until we humble ourselves, allowing Him to bring us away from our sinful habits to become more like Him. Are you living in 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 Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Jim Jackson.

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