

I didn't think I was worth saving

James: My name is James. I served in the Army 1985 to 1988. The only thing that really bothered me that happened in the military was when I joined, I was overweight and through basic training and AIT, I stayed overweight and then, I ended up with a Drill Sergeant that wanted me to be underweight and I fought with him the entire two and a half years I was there and he tried to get me discharged from the service. And finally, they came to me and said, okay, you have an option. You can stay here for another two years and have him over you, running you into the ground or we can discharge you medically under honorable conditions and you can go home now. He had just signed up for another five years to be there, make sure he was there while I was there, so I discharged early.

All I did when I got home was drink. I felt like I had failed because I had let this guy run me out of the military and then I got, from drinking got into drugs and got, destroyed my life. It affected everything because I actually didn't have relationships anymore. Nobody wanted to be around me. Didn't hold a job. I couldn't go to work, so it affected every aspect of my life.

I first started trying to seek any type of help about five years later. And that's only because I got arrested. That was one of the causes and conditions for me to getting out of jail and I learned some stuff about me, but at that point in my life, I thought that the things that I had done were far greater than what could ever be forgiven and so, it really didn't apply to me, so I thought.

I found out in rehab that I was molested when I was a little kid. I had blocked that completely out of my memory. I then understood why, when I would start drinking, I got really, really angry. A lot of the crimes that I committed; those were all things that, by normal standards, are frowned upon. They're part of the deadly sins, you know, and I committed most of them and I just didn't think that I was worth saving.

I called a friend of mine who I had met in the 12-step meetings and I sat down with him and he told me, James, you know, you can go ahead and die if you want to do that; that's where you're headed or you can try a different way of life; that it didn't really matter what I had done in the past. Everybody's done something and that if I would just give him some time; let him prove to me that the 12-step program worked.

You know at this point, what do I have to lose? The only thing I can lose here from here down is my life, so I went ahead and gave him a shot and through working the 12 steps as they are outlined with a sponsor, I started realizing that things were better; that there was a different way of life, even for me. Slowly but surely, things changed, when I looked in the mirror, I no longer hated the person I saw. People actually wanted me to be around. The life that I've gained through the 12-step recovery program is second to none I ever dreamed humanly possible for me. You know, I found a woman that loves me. I'm just amazed. The person that I am today is nowhere near the person that I was. It's a wonderful thing. You know, anybody can have this if they're willing to put forth a little bit of effort and I just love it.



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