

Joe Blackburn

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I guess I'd have to say I'd been a rebel all my life. From infancy, I've been subject to fits of rage that were truly awesome. At eight years of age, it took eight adults to hold me down to get an injection at the doctor's office. After I'd wrecked the office - breaking jars, knocking everything off the shelf, etc. This went on every time I had to go to the doctor. I also had dentists that refused to work on me because I would bite and fight. I had to go to an oral surgeon, who would put me to sleep (anesthesia) before doing any dental work. These are only a couple of examples to give you a picture of what I've been like. Many people are wearing scars because of me. I never respected any authority at all. I ran away from home at 15, and went to San Francisco in 1967. I did the whole "hippie" thing - drugs, free love, and rock 'n' roll. I panhandled to survive, and later found my way into selling drugs (acid, PCP, pills, cocaine), which was to stick with me as my only source of income to date. In the years in between, I've done three prison terms for assault with a deadly weapon, attempted murder/assault with a deadly weapon, and drugs.

I'm now doing my fourth term for possession of drugs for sale (meth). I had four strikes going against me at my trial, and the DA was pushing for a "strike-out." With everything looking dark, I cried out to God for help. Somehow, for some reason, the judge handed me down seven years at 80%, which tallies up to me doing about six years straight. And, y'know? I'm thankful! God has given me a miracle. I've asked Him to take over my life. I was blessed to come into acquaintance with Pastor Tom and Dottie, through a cell mate I had. Today, they are the only real friends I have. Everyone else I know is illegal, to be brief about it! I was doomed to be going back to my old neighborhood and drugs, or back to the motorcycle club I used to belong to that kicked me out because of my drug use. Yes, can you believe that? I got kicked out of an outlaw motorcycle club because of my drug use! Think I've been bad? But thanks to Tom and Dottie of "Love Lifted Me" and other things I've been doing (studying the Bible, etc.) I have a ray of hope. I don't get out until November, 2005, but when I do, I'm hoping to parole to the Bible Tabernacle, and meet new friends, and start a new life, this time with God leading the way. Love Lifted Me Recovery ministries, I don't think I could ever really explain what help you've been. The letters, tracts, studies, and just knowing real Christian love and fellowship have been a lifesaver, likely in the most literal sense. When I got your address I was in the midst of a year's "isolating/mental evaluation." Basically, they had me on "suicide watch" to really be honest. Today, I'm on medication, sure, but God's healing has also found me. Maybe someday, I'll be able to stop the drugs (medication). I feel close to that now. Thank you all so much. And again I say so much. The grace and peace of our Savior Jesus Christ always be with you all.