

Teen Challenge Update

Happy Thanksgiving From Teen Challenge!

*Though our mouths were full of song as the sea,
and our tongues of exultation as the multitude of its waves,
and our lips of praise as the wide-extended firmament;
though our eyes shone with light like the sun and the moon,
and our hands were spread forth like the eagles of heaven,
and our feet were swift as hinds,
we should still be unable to thank thee and bless thy name,
O Lord our God and God of our fathers,
for one thousandth or one ten thousandth part
of the bounties which thou has bestowed upon our fathers and upon us.*

~from the Hebrew Prayer Book



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NEW INFORMATION

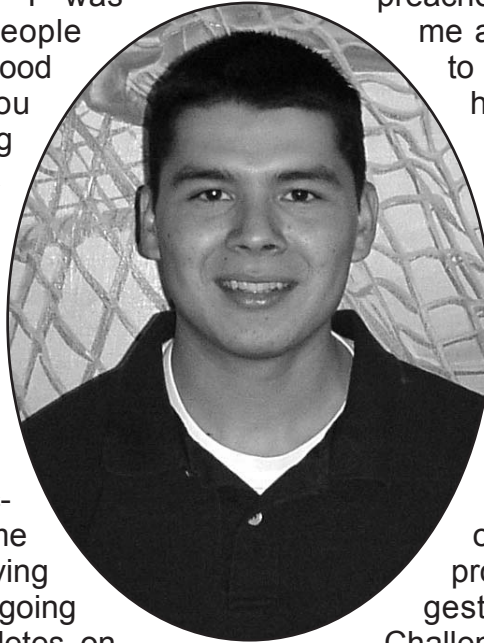
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November, 2003

Set Free—A Testimony of God's Grace

My name is Steven and I am 19 years old. Before coming to Teen Challenge of the Midlands, you could have found me on a first-class ride, straight to hell. To make things worse, I had no clue where I was headed. The only thing I was focused on, were the people around me and having a good time. I did everything you could possibly think of doing back then. My parents took me on vacations to New York City, Los Angeles, and more. One place we never did go to was church. I occasionally went with my sisters, but nothing really stuck. As I got older and into high school, I became very successful in sports and became more popular. This led to trying to keep my "reputation" and going out to party with other athletes on the weekends. Then, it led to drugs, and I found myself falling backwards. I was able to hide it for a while and go on with my sports and daily activities. But, by the time I knew it, I was skipping school to get high with friends. I started a relationship with a girl when I was 16, and became very close to her. One day, she was at a party and called for a ride home because she was intoxicated. I went and picked her up and we started home. I clearly remember her smiling and telling me she loved me; I felt so sure that we would be together forever and nothing would ever separate us. Just a few minutes later, I was searching for a cigarette and lighter, when I lost control of the car. My girlfriend had rolled down her window to smoke, and when we crashed and the car rolled, she was ejected from the vehicle and died on impact. I went into shock and lost my mind. I was taken to jail and then released on bail. I dropped out of school and began doing drugs worse than I had ever done before. I was to the point of suicide when the police put me back in jail for not following my bond regulations. As I sat in jail, I read the Bible some and hated every thing about it. I hated



God and believed he hated me. I lost all hope for any type of successful life. One day, I decided to attend a church service after another inmate kept asking me to go. I went and sat in the back and listened to this preacher tell me how Jesus loved me and wanted to reveal himself to me. Out of the hate in my heart, I argued with the preacher and wanted to leave. He sat me down and asked if he could pray with me for Jesus to reveal himself to me. For some reason, my heart said, "Let him do it." So, I did. That night, I had a hard time sleeping and found myself reading the Bible. The next day, I was pulled out of my cell to meet with my probation officer and she suggested that I come to Teen Challenge. I knew in my heart that this was God, so I agreed. The first week in the program, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and surrendered to him. Besides giving me an opportunity to grow spiritually with God, Teen Challenge has enabled me to get my GED, construction certification, and more. I have come to find out that God will never leave me nor forsake me, and he gives me a new hope in life. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." 1 Peter 1:3-7 (NIV)