



Seeking Something More

By Michelle Hamilton

James McCluney has experienced a slow but sure process of transformation. One directed by Christ and his deeper relationship with his savior. He is living proof, and shares his story to witness to others. It is a daily reminder for him as he continues to learn as a loving husband and a strong Godly influence in his sons lives.

At sixteen he began smoking marijuana

James grew up under the guidance of his grandparents. He remembers alcohol always being in the house. Yet, his drug use did not begin until age sixteen. He began by smoking marijuana with fellow, teenage, basketball players. Still, his frequent drug use did not start until a few years after entering the military. On the weekends he would attend different parties where speed, acid, cocaine, and other drugs were set out for anyone to try. He slowly experimented with all types of drugs. "Speed became his drug of choice. "It gave me that constant energy, needed in the military, to maintain a high rigid schedule," he stated. James then began mixing other drugs with speed, "I really did become dependent on drugs, even though it was more of a social thing to do." Throughout his six years in the military his battle with drugs was off and on, yet it was the focus of his life.

After the military, James continued his marijuana use. He was buying half-pounds bags at a time for his personal use. He eventually reached a point where this drug was not reaching the high anymore he needed so he began snorting cocaine. After a few years his world began to fall apart, he lost his grandmother, and his house, his life

had become a downward spiral using crack cocaine. Four years later he was in a motor vehicle accident resulting in a concussion; now an excuse to use his drugs. Sometimes he would ask himself "Why am I doing the things that I am doing?"

"I was tired of the things going on in my life"

But it was long and he was arrested for misdemeanors. After two weeks in jail, he met a prison minister. James recalls, he asked me, 'Son do you want to be saved?' I said, 'You bet!' I was tired of a lot of things that were going on in my life. All these things led me to seek something else." He found forgiveness and a clean slate, through Jesus Christ's death on the cross and what that meant. James accepted Jesus as a Savior and Redeemer of his soul. He said, "When Christ first came into my life, my thinking started to change. How I looked at things and how I reacted to them began to change, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit."

Once, out of jail he headed to Greenville, SC, to start over. He went to the Greenville Rescue Mission, where he met Winn Freeman who developed the Overcomer's program. James did not enter this program; but he took classes to become an electrician's helper. After his training, he took a job in Georgia.

Thinking he was on the right track, but he got caught-up again smoking crack cocaine for a two and a half month bender. James remembers falling back on his knees, asking the Lord to forgive and guide him once again.

A new creature in Christ and a new life

James returned back to the Greenville Rescue Mission and joined the Overcomers Program under the leadership of Winn. He began to study the bible and develop a strong prayer life. He learned how to rely on God rather than to go back to old habits. James continues to grow under his mentor and friend Winn at Wisdom In Living Life Ministry, here he has grown tremendously in every phase of his life. God blessed him with a wife and a new son as well as a step-son. "God allowed me to get all the wildness out of my system so I can guide my sons to be Godly men.