

Five Years to Life

by Sam Huddleston (2007)

Sam grew up in a stable family until his mom left when he was 8. His dad was a deacon in the church & his grand-dad was a sheriff deputy. His dad taught him to work hard. In his freshman year he gave into peer pressure & got drunk. His conscience gave him an out, but he didn't take it. A friend got him started on pot. He started stealing for excitement, then to pay for drugs [he would steal from his family & neighbors].

He wrote his dad a vicious note & left home. He wanted to come, but was too proud. He moved in with his mom & step-dad. She let him get away with more. Every time he got drunk, he would get into a fistfight with his step-dad. At 15 he started having sex and it became like another drug. He stole his step-dad's car, stole gas & spent a night in juvenile hall & raped.

At 15 he was tired of life & tried to commit suicide, but failed. He pulled a knife on someone & was sent back to juvenile hall for a month. He was put on probation & moved to L.A. to get a fresh start. But he found the wrong crowd again & trouble was there. He moved back in with his mom.

He got a girl pregnant & became a dad at 16. He tried to be good, but couldn't. He went back to juvenile hall for burglary. He was drunk & tried to steal his mom's car, but was stopped & he said he wished she was dead. He moved back in with his dad, got a job, but couldn't shake his bad habits. He started using LSD & moved back with his mom.

At 17 he started writing bad checks & was placed on house arrest for a week waiting to go to a youth camp. So, every day that week he got drunk or loaded. That week he robbed a liquor store while his friend killed the attendant. He was tried as an adult & sentenced to 5 years to life. His dad told him if you need help & I can't be there call out to Jesus. He will always be there to help.

In prison his name was B-36718. The only safe place was locked inside a private cell. Most inmates lifted weights for protection. His family visited him, but most inmates didn't get visitors. His grand-dad died & he was allowed to go to the funeral. He determined that day he would make his grand-dad proud. Throughout all of this his dad's love for him never failed.

Several parole boards denied him. He was transferred to a forest-fire-fighting program. It had open dorms & he felt vulnerable. He started going to Bible studies, reading & praying. He stopped blaming others & took responsibility for his actions. He asked forgiveness & quit having nightmares. The change was not easy, but it happened.

A man from Match-Two (M-2) came and mentored him. He was paroled in 1976 & never went back [80% of inmates return]. He got a job at \$3.50/hr at a truss plant. He met a girl & got married [adopted her 2 kids]. He went to Bethany Bible College & graduated [but 1st he had to learn to study]. God's hand was on Sam, but he had to get the poison that's in him out: he began counseling.

He later earned his master's degree in family counseling & a doctorate of ministry & God's Spirit whispers to him: "This is the new you I had planned all along."

Quotes: "Never let anyone do for you what you can do for yourself." "The more I learned about Jesus the more I wanted to tell someone about Him." (Ed Huddleston)

Books: Grand Slam (Dr. Sam Huddleston)