

JANUARY 2021

PGMNews

Felix now experiences God's abundant life.

WHEN FELIX WAS ALL ALONE, YOU HELPED BRING HIM TO CHRIST!

Imagine having the very foundation of your life ripped out from underneath you and tragically taken. At only five years of age, Felix witnessed his mother's murder and the subsequent suicide of his father. After a lifetime of

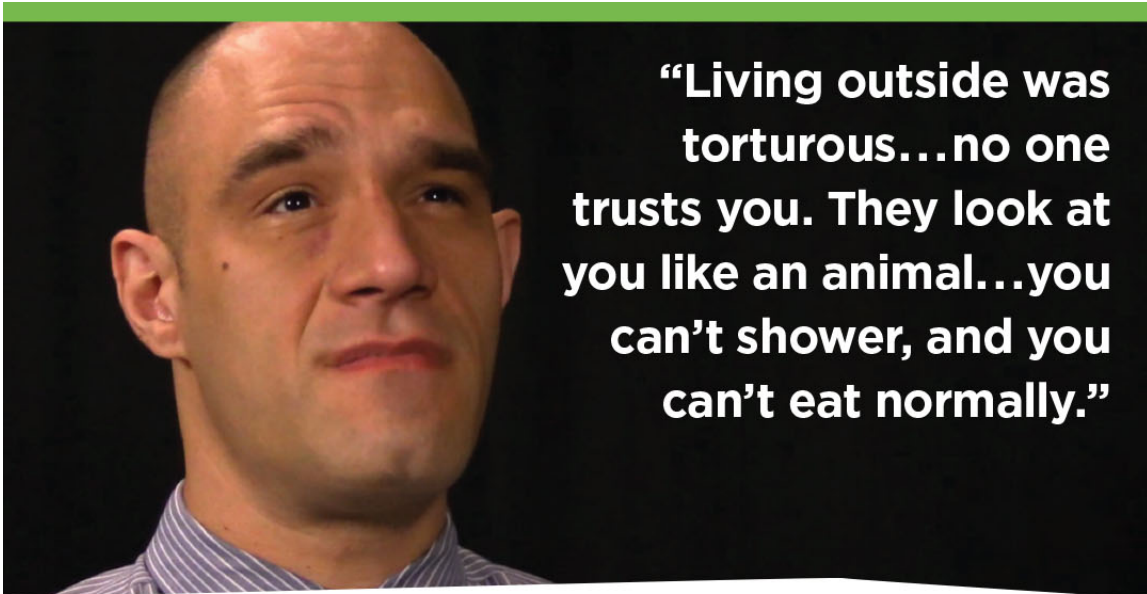
anger and search for wholeness—and nearly a decade of homelessness—Felix came to Pacific Garden Mission, where with your help, he is now building a new foundation upon the One who will never leave him . . . *Jesus Christ!*

FELIX

"When I was a kid, my family didn't have a lot of money. My parents had drug addictions, and there was a lot of abuse in my house. At some point, my parents' relationship got kind of rocky, and my father became abusive. My mother tried to get away from him. She was no longer

using drugs and told him she didn't want to use anymore . . . she wanted to clean her life up.

"I was about five years old when I lost both of my parents. My father somehow broke into our apartment and killed my mother—with my brother and me there. I was *right there* when it happened, and it's affected me greatly.



“Living outside was torturous...no one trusts you. They look at you like an animal...you can’t shower, and you can’t eat normally.”

“A short time after my mother was killed, my father committed suicide in prison. It seemed unreal, and everything was completely different after both my parents died. Since then, my relationship with my family has been terrible . . . every time they see my face, they see my father’s face.

“I got out of high school, was selling drugs, and eventually started using harder drugs. It led nowhere, and it was at that point when I came to Pacific Garden Mission for the first time. I wish I had paid more attention. The Gospel was right there in front of me, but I thought it was just a ‘feel-good’ story. I still had that hole in me because I lacked a relationship with Christ.

“When I left the Mission, I started living on the streets, which lasted a long time—around 10 years. But, I had already found some connection with Christ at that point. The seeds of the Gospel were planted.

“Living outside was torturous. I think it’s one of the worse things you can

experience on this earth because no one trusts you. They look at you like an animal . . . you can’t shower, and you can’t eat normally. You start to hate because you see so many people doing well, and they won’t even stop to have a conversation with you. Being homeless comes with a lot of stress. I felt like I was crying out in the wilderness. My heart was screaming for help, but I couldn’t go to anyone. And that’s when I came back to the Mission.

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” —Hebrew 13:5b

“Returning to Pacific Garden Mission, I started listening. I started *really* listening because I trusted Jesus Christ, but I was still unsure of His love for me. As an overnight guest for the second time, I had a different view of things. The preachers made more sense; the message of the Gospel was real . . . it wasn’t just something to make me feel better. I felt like there was something *real*. As someone who has had many problems—with

people and just getting by in life—that meant something to me. When you have something missing, there is *always* something missing . . . but Christ was waiting for me. I devoted my time to studying Scripture and applying the Gospel to my life.

“In the Bible program, I learned that there are people out there who love you no matter who you are—and it’s not so much of our own will as much as it is a reflection of God’s love through us. I used to be the most aggressive person, and the Bible program taught me how to love people and forgive them when they make mistakes. I have learned to trust people. Without God, I would still be addicted to meth. Without God, I would still be picking up cigarette butts off the ground. Without God, I would still be cursing my father for what he did. Now, God is my rock.

“I’ve been here for a little over a year now. I have grown in many ways,



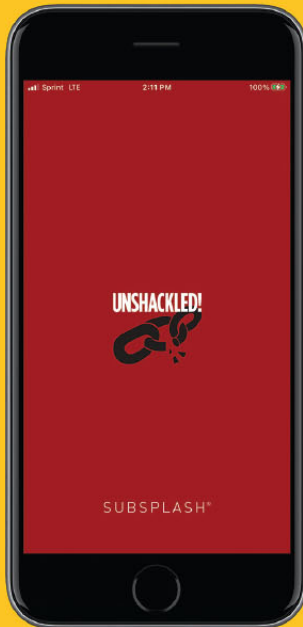
Felix is a shining example of a life transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

including spiritually. I have learned a lot, and my teachers have helped me. Soon, I will be graduating, which means I will be able to start working and saving up to build a new life—hopefully even start a business. To be whole and secure is something we should all strive to be, and God can provide that no matter where you are in life. Even if you are living in an alley or out in a forest like I was, God can bring you back and make you whole.”



Only a relationship with Jesus Christ could fill the hole within Felix’s heart. With no family or spiritual foundation, Felix was like a lost sheep amongst wolves. His first brief visit to PGM planted the seeds of the Gospel. And when he came back, with a broken but open heart, Felix allowed Christ into his life. He is now building a new life upon a new foundation, one that is solid, true, and eternally free of the pains and bondages we face during our brief time here on Earth. Your faithful and generous support maintains a lifeline to those who are lost and in need of a Savior.

Finding a quiet moment, Felix reads Scripture and meditates on God’s new purpose for his life.



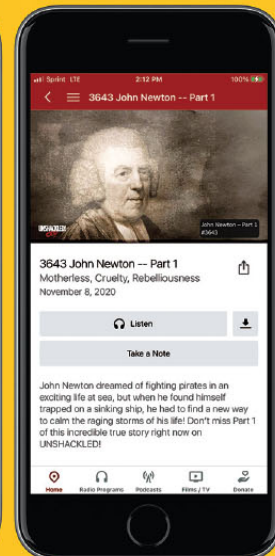
DOWNLOAD THE **UNSHACKLED! APP** FOR NEW WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Unshackled! App Downloads 66,833
App total plays 1,005,583



Unshackled! premiered on September 23, 1950, and since the time of its humble beginnings, it now airs on 3,170 radio stations throughout the world. Broadcast in 14 languages, the weekly program has helped save countless souls sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

While we are still recording weekly, and plan to hold live recordings once the COVID-19 situation is resolved, we invite you to download our **Unshackled!** phone application. Updated weekly with new testimonies of lives transformed, you can access the archive of both radio and PGM TV episodes through the app. *Go to your phone app store to download it for free!*



THANK YOU for your generous support over the holidays. Hundreds of men and women received hot holiday meals and warm shelter, with fellowship in celebration of God's gifts to us. Your compassion made it possible.

—PGM Staff



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski
President, Pacific Garden Mission

THE GOSPEL IS STILL PREACHED

As we begin another year, I start by looking back. The Mission was founded in 1877—and I quote Mel Trotter in 1914 when he said, “The Pacific Garden Mission means everything to me. I consider the brightest spot in all Chicago is at 100 East Van Buren Street. The darkest night of all my life, I went into the Pacific Garden Mission and there heard the precious story of love . . . heard that Jesus loved the drunkard. When the invitation was given, I raised my hand for prayer and Jesus was pointed out to me by Harry Monroe as a living Savior, and the light of God shone in my soul and I had a glimpse of Jesus.”

Mel went on to start 69 rescue missions around the world. In 1914, Mel said that we were the brightest spot in all of Chicago—and in 2021, that statement still rings true. I recently spoke to a man who said the best thing to ever happen to him was coming to Pacific Garden Mission. Chicago is a dark city. Last year, we had numerous riots, some coming within blocks of the Mission. Stores in the area were boarded up. The number of shootings and murders is astounding. Drugs are

now being used in the open with no fear of consequence; gangs control some neighborhoods and operate in plain sight. Many are afraid to go outside—fear reigns in the hearts of many.

In the middle of this madness stands the brightest light still . . . *the Pacific Garden Mission*. Many still stumble into the Mission looking for direction and are driven by their need for shelter, food, and safety. The message we proclaimed through God’s Word in 1877 has not changed, and we are still seeing people set free. Songs are still sung, the Gospel is still preached, and testimonies are still shared—and thanks to you, our doors are still open. I want to thank our Lord, Jesus—and you, our donors—for coming alongside us this turbulent year, supporting the less fortunate, and allowing the Mission to remain Chicago’s brightest place. ***Thank you.***



At PGM, women who were discarded by the world have found hope in Christ and the blessings of fellowship.

PGMNews JANUARY 2021 • Vol.86, No.1
Published monthly by Pacific Garden Mission

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GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Stephen Welch,
Director of Development

In the words of our founders written in 1917, "One look backwards causes me to marvel when I think of the vicissitude through which the Mission has passed. Its testings and triumphs, its struggles and victories, will never be known until the Recording Angel reveals the secret record."

Through it all, our supporting friends like you have stood by our side with the sole purpose of reaching the lost with the Gospel of Christ. You have helped us continue to serve with the compassion of Christ and minister through the transforming message of God's Word. Together, in 2021, we will

offer life answers through faith in Jesus Christ, through any season of life, so that our guests become fully functioning followers of Christ.

As we move forward into the future, please pray about how God can use you in the mission field at PGM.

One way might be through a legacy gift. By including Pacific Garden Mission in your will or estate plan, you can help transform the lives of broken men and women far into the future. Your gift will help men and women receive the help they need and start anew in Jesus Christ.

To talk with us about making a legacy gift to Pacific Garden Mission, please contact Stephen Welch at welchs@pgm.org or 312-429-6700.

**May God bless our years ahead.
Thank you for your faithful support.**

UPDATE ON A PGM GRADUATE

John, whose testimony was highlighted in the September 2020 PGM News, has since graduated the Bible program and is now working in a vocational training program. John is still living here at the Mission and volunteers during his off time. Please pray for John and the other graduates to stay strong in their commitment to and faith in Jesus Christ.



GIVE NOW at pgm.org/donate

Learn more by visiting Pacific Garden Mission, where lost souls find hope, compassion, and purpose.