

# Prayed Out / Stayed Out

By: Walter Janeway



For years I roamed this country, heartbroken. When only a boy of thirteen, sin drove me from my home and made me an outcast in the slums of Chicago. From then on crimes piled up behind me for twenty-eight years, and every day, down under that old shirt lay a broken heart. My life took me to the taverns, the gambling halls, and behind prison walls.

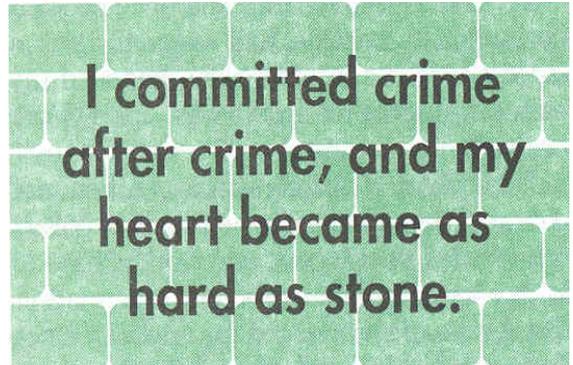
I committed crime after crime, and my heart became as hard as stone. It was no trouble for me to hold a man up and take his money. One time I held up five men and followed the last one into a restaurant, sat down beside him, and paid for his meal with his own money. I ran bars and dives all over this country. I took what went with that life, and many times ended up in the jails and penitentiaries. When I came out, I'd go back to the same way of life. I never knew a day or hour of happiness.

For years I had everything a gambler could have. I wore the diamonds, walked on fine carpets, and danced on ballroom floors. I made big money and spent it all; lost thousands of dollars in a day. Then I got so low that I had to get out of town. That's what sin did for me!

## A Praying Mother

But back in Middlesboro, Kentucky, up on the side of a hill in an old log cabin, was a mother who prayed for me. I thank God that He answered that mother's prayers. In the Spokane County Jail one day, I saw a woman with an Apostolic Faith paper. I begged her to give it to me. When she did, I crawled up on the top bunk and read two testimonies, one of a drug addict and one of a criminal.

The people who gave those testimonies said that God had saved them. My life was like theirs. I was trembling like a leaf. It hadn't been two hours earlier that I had begged the jailer to give me more cocaine, so I could lie down and rest a few hours. I knew the life those men had lived. When I read that Jesus could save that kind of man, it was the best message I had ever heard.



Although I had never read a chapter in the Bible, a hope sprang up in my heart that day. There were forty-eight criminals in that tank and one in my cell. I told my cell mate, "I never prayed a prayer in my life, but here is where I am going to pray. If God can save that kind of man, I believe there's hope for me. You can stay in here or move out, but I am going to see if there is a God."

## A Prayer Heard

I dropped to that that steel floor, with the church paper under my knees, and I called on God. It was my first prayer, but that day a criminal and drug addict prayed a prayer that God heard. All those crimes came up before me, the men I had robbed, the prisons where I had escaped and was wanted. Tempted to quit, I prayed, "O God, don't let me get up until You do something for me!" While I was praying the men kicked the door, threw cigarette butts in on me, and cursed me. But I kept on.

That prayer changed my whole life. Before that, I had gotten out of jail almost every way a man could. I had been bailed out and paroled out. I had sawed out and shot my way out. But that day, I prayed my way out, and I have stayed out. I never robbed another man's house, never stole another man's car, nor blew another safe.

The next day, I was taken to trial. I had never pled guilty in my life, but that day I did. I also asked to tell my right name, though I hadn't told it for years. I told the judge that I had carried the two guns which lay there, and the money was what I had stolen. Twenty minutes later, an officer led me to the door and said, "You can go. If you've got anything to face in this world, go face it. We are done with you." That's what God can do!

A few nights later, I came to the Apostolic Faith Church. There I fell at the altar and told the people, "You won't be bothered with me long. I've got a lifetime to face behind bars. I am wanted everywhere!" They told me God would deliver me.

## Set Free

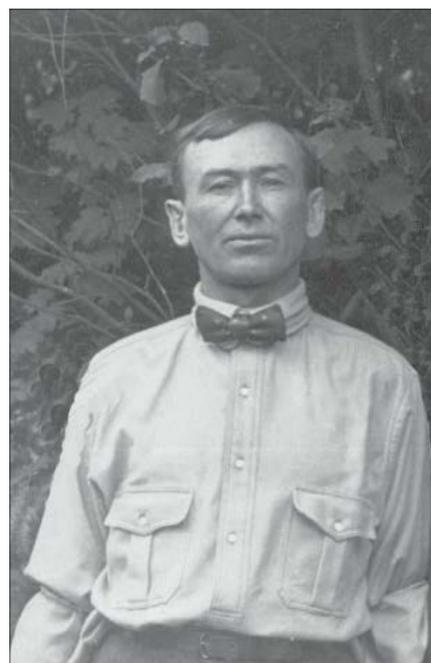
God did deliver me. He went before me and set me free. I have never served a day since God saved me. I went back over the tracks of a criminal's life and faced penitentiaries from coast to coast.

I faced the officials at the Terre Haute jail where I had escaped and took fourteen others out with me. I went to Indianapolis where I swam a canal with the officers shooting at me. In St. Louis, I returned to a millionaire's home where I'd had a shooting scrape and shot out a man's eye. When I confessed, the man said, "I freely forgive you." The mother fell into my arms and wept. Don't you see what God can do?

One day I sat down in front of the Seattle chief of police and told him of the robberies I had pulled off in that town. When I finished, he shook my hand and said, "If there's never a key turned on you until I turn it, there will never be one." I lived for ten years in that town where I had once walked the streets with two guns—and had used them. I lived as a respected citizen where I had once peddled my clothes for cocaine, and where the police had dragged me into an alley, knocked my teeth out, kicked me in the ribs, and left me for dead.

Today I am a citizen, a taxpayer. I am not a tramp. I have paid back thousands of dollars to straighten up my past, and worked hard to do it. I have a Christian home. I have never been broke, never wanted for anything since God saved me. I am one of the happiest people on earth, thanking God for victory.

I know that God can save a drug addict and criminal and change his life. Thank God for Bible salvation!



***Walter Janeway shared his powerful testimony for many years in the street ministry meetings. He has now gone to be with the Lord***