

IF I COULD DO IT AGAIN

I will never forget that night. It was Christmas Eve and we were waiting in the lobby with people I didn't know and probably would choose not to talk to if the situation was different. As we walked up the back stairs, I thought my wife and younger son should be the first to see him and talk. Here I was a Sr. Vice-President of the Baptist Hospital waiting to see my son who was arrested with felony charges of burglary of a habitation and a weapons charge in jail. Besides that, he was a known gang leader in our community. It was the most devastating time in my life and of my family. I couldn't imagine this was happening to my family or me.

You see my older son chose drugs, gangs, and living on the streets with other kids over our home. He was expelled from Tascosa High School his senior year. A blossoming soccer career was lost and at age 16 we told him if he couldn't live by our rules and standards, he had to leave out home...and he gladly left to live on the streets. He sold clothes, guns, drugs and stole from people to survive.

I remember the day he was born and I thought to myself "I was going to be a GREAT dad." But things seem to get out of control in my life trying to prove myself as a man, a husband, a father, a boss and as a leader in the community. I became a workaholic, worked all hours of the night and day and if there were something to be done, I would be the one. As a result, I came home tired, frustrated, angry and full of fear as I look back. You see, I could not fail as that was taught to me at a young age. Work harder, be more and do more and *You Will Make It in Life*. I did but at the sacrifice of my wife and children. I was verbally demanding, abusive and I successfully took away my sons' pride and self-esteem. My wife was afraid of me and only by the miracle of the changes in my life did divorce not happen...even though it was thought about in the quiet moments of life when it all seemed so bad.

So, what happened to make the change? To just "cut to the chase", my heavenly Father forgave me and I realized words such as Grace and Mercy were not only powerful words but also life changing words. For me, the change was immediate and earth shaking. I think the reason for that was that I was so tired and at my ropes end. I had tried the counseling (all of us, he and I and just me) and I realized the world's answers had not worked. For me to be a new man and a new father, I finally realized that only my Heavenly Father could build a new man in me through my spirit. For men to be Great fathers, husbands and just a good man, we first have to get our Spirit Man in order.