

# Wanting Change in Your Heart

by Edward Ross

A person doesn't just change overnight; you have to want to change in your heart.

Today I am a recovering addict. After using drugs for 35 years, going in and out jail, being homeless, living every day without a sense of purpose, not having a job, always living the fast life, I had lost touch with the real world. With my long jail record and no job history, changing my life, I thought, was impossible. I said, "Here is a man 60 years old. What can I do at that age?" I told myself changing takes too long, but in my heart I wanted to change. I was tired of living the way I had been.

One night it was real cold and I had nowhere to go so I went into a drug program to get out of the cold. While in the program I heard people talking about loving yourself and giving yourself a chance. I was tired of living the way I was. So I talked with the group leader and told him that I wanted to change. He asked me why and I said, "Because I have lost a lot of people in my family and I would like to get to know my children and I don't want to die a drug addict."

He said, "You took the first step by coming into the program and not using drugs today. You haven't lost your life; your life has begun to change." I started being truthful with myself and others, going to meetings, listening to other people who were hooked on drugs.

I learned I must control my deepest perception of myself lest I be overwhelmed by the forces of negativism and defeat. The person you see in the mirror is the person you must live with; if you cannot say to that person, "Good morning, how are you? I love you today," that person is in danger because by not loving yourself you cannot love others.

When you give yourself a chance and take one day at a time, people will see that you are trying and they will help you. I liked cutting hair so I went to school because I knew that I needed

a profession. About a year later, I became a licensed barber. I became confident that I could change.

I am now back in prison for a parole violation and have enrolled in the programs available in here - Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Cocaine Anonymous. These programs will help me stay drug free and achieve my future goals of becoming a drug counselor and continuing my profession as a barber.

I believe that God helped me change. Without Him there is no way I could have come out of the life that I was living. With the help of God I now live each

day like it was my last and each day like I would like tomorrow to be. I am blessed.

I know now how hard it is to change. I had to change every thing about myself—the way I got out of bed, how I wore my clothes. Eventually I began to see by changing me, I changed the world around me. Now the world is a better place to live. Thank God.

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*Edward Ross was born in Greenwood, SC and moved to Philadelphia, PA when he was nine. He attended Montgomery Community College and is a licensed barber. He will be released from prison in October 2007.*