

# DAMASCUS WAY REENTRY CENTER

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## *Faith and Hope Restored...*



Mike's father was a criminal. His parents divorced when he was 3, and his mother later remarried giving Mike a "normal" childhood. That all changed when Mike met his father for the 1<sup>st</sup> time at age 17.

Mike says: "*When my father and I met, it was a unique experience. We shared a real bond right away.*" After his encounter, Mike became a different person. "*My heart began to harden,*" says Mike. "*I learned how to hustle, played pool and fought for money. I became irresponsible and started to live for this world.*" Mike's biological dad was a debt collector and a master burglar. This lifestyle intrigued Mike and his dad soon began bringing him along on jobs.

### *Through Life in Christ*

From that point on, Mike devoured the Word. He did 3 Bible correspondence courses and went to every possible Bible class.

This time around, Mike realized the need for a positive release plan. He applied to Damascus Way as part of the Work Release program. Mike says, "*When I arrived, I got such a warm greeting. [Caseworkers] Ron and Terrence prayed with me and helped me develop a plan. They had me write down my goals and really monitored my success.*"

**I Corinthians 13:13** states "Now these 3 remain: Faith, Hope, and Love. But the greatest of these is Love." Mike found this verse to be true at Damascus Way. His faith and hope were allowed to be restored through the love of Christ. That's why Damascus Way exists. Every month, many new faces enter our program with faith and hope that has been shattered. Many have been through multiple prison sentences, tried before and failed. What makes Damascus different? The Love of Jesus. Only Christ can restore lost faith and hope. We can only continue to provide this opportunity because of your support. Thank you for your generosity. **As you give, lives are changed.**

Around the same time, Mike also began using chemicals. By the age of 20, Mike was in prison for the first time for armed robbery. Mike says of the experience, "*It was very difficult. I knew what it was like to be [live] right, and now I was [living] really wrong.*"

Some good did come out of the experience; Mike earned his diploma and began to enjoy academics. When released Mike enrolled in Brown College for radio and broadcasting, but still was not living right. Three months before his graduation Mike was arrested for Aggravated Robbery on a Police Officer.

This time Mike was sentenced to 88 months. While incarcerated Mike heard a lot of God talk. He was surrounded by Christians and his faith began to grow. But when Mike got released in '96, he

was lonely. He had 2 kids from his childhood girlfriend, and that relationship had finally dissolved. "***I had no program for success,***" says Mike. "*I was already 'in trouble' upon getting out [because I had no plan]*". Mike went back to what he knew and was soon busted again for burglary.

In and out of the system again and now in his late 30's, Mike was arrested once more in Spring of 2006. Back in Hennepin County Jail, he finally surrendered his life to Christ when Wendy Torkelson from Teen Challenge came to speak. "*I realized that faith is a lifestyle,*" stated Mike. "*It's about obedience.*"

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While in Damascus, Mike got a job installing countertops and was blessed with a good spiritual boss. He remains in Bible courses on a weekly basis and also has become a member with a local congregation. He's now a grandfather and visiting with his children again. He says, "*I have a new plan with a new purpose. If it doesn't involve God, I don't want it.*"