



## A BASEBALL STAR WHO LOST IT ALL—AND HOW HE GOT IT BACK

with Blake Russell

### ▶ FOCUS VERSE

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!  
2 Corinthians 5:17

### ▶ DISCUSSION

1. **When was the first time you drank alcohol? (See 1 Corinthians 6:2 AMP.)**
  - a. The first time you did drugs?
  - b. Who provided them and what were the circumstances?
  - c. How did they make you feel at the time?
  - d. If you have never used drugs or drank alcohol, why do you think you were able to maintain that commitment?
2. **When you were a teenager, did you have a certain talent or strength, athletic or otherwise, that others noticed and appreciated?**
  - a. Did you receive special privileges or leeway because of that gift?
  - b. Did you take advantage of those privileges to a point where it hurt you or someone else?
3. **Did your success with that gift or talent enable you to ignore things that weren't going well in your life? (See Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 16:5, and Proverbs 16:18 ESV.)**



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- a. Did you ignore those problems to the point where they got out of control?
- 4. As a teenager, Blake says, he'd base his decision to take drugs on whether he thought he could sober up before he got home.**
- a. Have you ever had an addiction or shameful habit that caused you to make those kinds of calculations?
- b. What lengths did you go to in order to conceal your actions from your loved ones?
- 5. Even after he got released from prison the first time, Blake made the conscious decision to resume selling drugs because the money was better than his construction job, and because "the state had already pulled their trump card" by sentencing him to one prison term.**
- a. Can you detect the hopelessness beneath Blake's brashness—the idea that things had already gotten as bad as they could get, so he had nothing to lose and he might as well do whatever he wanted?
- b. Does that resonate with anything you've experienced in your own life?
- 6. Discuss the changes in Blake's life and behavior after he read the book his mother had given him and had his "moment of salvation"—things as simple as not swearing anymore and apologizing to fellow inmates he'd fought with. (See *John 8:36 NIV*.)**
- a. Are there any small changes like that that you'd like to make in your own life, but haven't been able to?
- b. What do you think it would take to make those changes stick?
- 7. Have you ever "hit rock bottom," as Blake describes it?**
- a. What did you learn in those rock-bottom moments that you weren't aware of, or were aware of but didn't believe, when things were better?
- 8. At what point in your life would you say you were most prideful, arrogant, or self-centered? (See *James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6, and Matthew 23:12 ESV*.)**
- a. If you could talk to that person today, what would you tell him?

