



## FROM JAIL AND ADDICTION TO HOPE AND REDEMPTION

with Phil Shuler and Troy Gardner

### ▶ FOCUS VERSE

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’  
Matthew 25:40

### ▶ DISCUSSION

- 1. According to Phil Shuler, Neil Richardson was inspired to found SafeHouse while he was working as a prison chaplain—Neil had high hopes for a particular inmate to turn his life around and succeed when he was released, but that inmate got arrested again less than 24 hours after leaving prison. (See *Colossians 3:12-14.*)**
  - a. Have you ever known someone like that—a person who was in perfect position to succeed but threw it all away in a single moment of weakness?
  - b. What role did that person play in your life?
  - c. What caused them to derail their success, and did your perception of them change in any way afterward?
- 2. Continuing with the first question, have you ever been the person who threw away a great opportunity or certain success in a moment of weakness? (See *Genesis 25:29-34.*)**
  - a. What was it that pulled you away from the promising path you were on?
  - b. Were you ever able to regroup and get back on the right track, and if so, who or what helped you do that?
  - c. If not, what’s something missing from your life that would help you achieve what you’ve been striving for?



- 3. When you hear the words “drug addict,” what are the first thoughts or images that pop into your head? (See *Philippians 2:3-8.*)**
- a. What about the words “homeless person”?
- 4. When you see someone sleeping on the street, or when someone approaches you for money, do you ever stop to think about the circumstances in their life that might have driven them to that low point? (See *Proverbs 11:24.*)**
- a. Did Phil’s and Troy’s stories inspire you to think more deeply about those people?
- 5. Overall, how do you view people who have done prison time but have since been released?**
- a. Do you view them as people who have paid their debt to society and are worthy of a second chance, or do you still harbor some resentment or mistrust toward them?
- b. Did Troy’s story change those views at all?
- 6. Troy talks about driving around with his wife and envying someone driving a fancy car, but then remembering that somebody somewhere is probably envious of the car *they’re* driving. Think of a material possession of someone else’s—car, home, designer clothing, electronics—that you’ve envied lately. Now think of the people who might be envying the same thing *you* have. What are some ways in which you live better and more securely than a large number of people, but might have been taking for granted lately? (See *Proverbs 14:30.*)**
- 7. If you could wave a magic wand and solve one problem that is currently affecting our society, what would it be?**
- a. What’s something you could do right now (or in the near future) that, in some small way, might fight back against that problem or alleviate the suffering of the people affected by it?

