

From a Hit Man to A New Creation

How God can turn anyone—from a hit man to a drug-addicted rock star like me—into a new creation

I left the so-called good life. A life filled with beautiful girls, free beer, first-class plane tickets, fast cars, fancy houses, fame, fans—you name it and I had it. It was the ultimate rock-star fantasy life that, for some reason, came true for me. I had been the lead guitarist for the band Korn, traveling the world and making millions of dollars, all the while being hopelessly addicted to crystal meth. I had a daughter I was responsible for and I was failing her. I had a life I was throwing away, and I woke up each day wishing that some force would simply take me out of my misery.

Thankfully, that didn't happen. Instead of that force taking me out of my misery, I got a new reason to live. In January 2005, I found God, and I've never been the same since. Looking back on it now, I'm amazed at the distance that I've traveled.

I recently heard a true story about a guy who also experienced a radical change in his life. If you thought *my* life change was amazing, wait until you read this: The guy was a hit man for the Mexican Mafia.

A murderer.

An assassin.

For 17 years his job was to take people out of this world. That was his duty. If you heard a knock on your door and his face was on the other side when you opened it, that was the last face you would ever see. His whole life was filled with and surrounded by violence. It didn't stop with the violence

he directly *caused*, either. His own life was always in danger because of what he did for a living, and he also put his family's lives in danger. Because of his lifestyle, he always expected that he would be killed at a young age.

He eventually ended up serving about five years in prison, having been charged with 19 counts, including murder for hire and kidnap for ransom. Oddly enough, he beat most of those charges—I guess he had some good lawyers on his side—but he still had to serve time. By the time he got out of prison, he was something of a hero on the streets because he'd done so little time for all his crimes.

But his life as a hero didn't last very long. He got arrested again—one last time.

One last time in the back of a police car. One last time behind bars. Little did he know, his whole life was going to change behind those bars.

After that final arrest he was kept in a high-powered maximum-security prison. I guess being locked up didn't slow down his business any, though, because (while incarcerated) he was actually hired to kill a guy who was serving time in the same prison—coincidentally, in the cell next to his.

One day, as the two men were sitting in their cells, the intended victim called the assassin's name, and they stared at each other via the little mirrors that the prisoners used to see each other. The hit man could see that the guy he'd planned to kill was shooting up dope. As he pumped dope into his arms, he talked to the assassin about Jesus.

The assassin got really angry at the mismatch between words and actions and thought to himself, *What a hypocrite!*

The assassin then started to wonder if this guy was just trying to mess with his mind. Suspicious of that, he listened with attention as the intended victim confessed that he was a

backslidden Christian who still felt Jesus within him.

Suddenly, a miracle began to take place: As the assassin listened, the words started to become real to him, and divine love began to enter his heart. As the assassin's heart was changing, a conflict arose inside.

The hit man told his intended victim to shut up because he was starting to cry from what he was feeling inside. He didn't want to cry, but the power of God's love was too strong for the murderer's heart.

One day soon after that experience, the assassin was still trying to decide if he was going to go through with the murder. In the end, he decided he would make the kill after all. He saw the guy in the prison showers later and decided to go for it. He was strapped and ready to kill, while the other guy wore only a towel.

But as the seconds ticked by, he found that he just couldn't follow through with the hit. He couldn't kill anymore.

✘ The murderer's heart had been melted by the unconditional love of God. The assassin didn't realize it, but everything in God's world was conspiring to help him find the righteous path. Just like in Romans 8:28, God was causing all things to work together for good through His love.

By the grace and tender mercy of God, that assassin was forgiven, and Jesus made him a brand-new person.

This man, whom God had made a new creation, now travels the world and tells people his story. God caused all things to work together for good in this man, this former killer, because he was called according to God's purpose. He answered that call and allowed God to give him a new heart and a new life.

Some people may wonder: *How can God forgive a killer? What*

about all those people he murdered? Are they saved, too?

It's a valid point, but here's the thing: God will take care of all that. Those things aren't for us to figure out; not for us to judge. God sees sin as sin. Stealing condemns us just as severely as an assassin's murder condemns him. But there's *no* condemnation for those who are in Christ (see Rom. 8:1). I think people should look at it like this: If God loved this murderer and restored his life, then you should be even more convinced that He loves you and will do the same for you.

The hands of God are full of His love and mercy, which endures forever. It's a mind-boggling thing that no human being can fathom. Jesus died in place of all of us on earth. Everybody. Even murderers! He chooses people and radically changes them to prove, without a doubt, that He actually exists. That He actually forgives. That He actually saves. Jesus enters those people's hearts and changes their lives. And nobody can explain these transformations.

I believe that God chooses to radically change the lives of people such as this former Mexican Mafia member and a rock star drug addict like me because He wants to show the world the power and the reality of His love. So many people think that people like us are beyond forgiveness, but God has chosen to love us and give us a second chance in life. I think we all should follow God's heart so that we can see this world radically changed.

If God could step into this assassin's heart and change him, He can do it with anybody. It's a spiritual change that no doctor, scientist or scholar can explain.

Sometimes I wonder if God changes people who are so evil as a way to reach the many people in the world who think they're good enough already—the people who think: *I don't need to be saved. I've never robbed a bank, killed anybody or sold drugs. I'm a good person.*

I believe that *everyone* needs salvation. If you're a human being, you will one day face death, and it says in the Bible that Jesus is the only one who can save you from death. All of us need Christ. Nobody is good enough in God's eyes. That's the whole reason He sent Jesus into the world to save the world.

There are no other religions that have so many documented radical changes in the hearts and lives of human beings. Those miracles should be all the evidence anybody needs to know, without a doubt, that Jesus Christ is, like John 14:6 says, the way, the truth and the life.

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Brian "Head" Welch was a founding member of Korn. In 2005, after years of struggling with substance abuse, he experienced an intense spiritual awakening that helped him overcome his problems with drugs and alcohol. He wrote about this experience in his 2007 New York Times best-selling memoir, *Save Me from Myself*, which was also the title of his first solo album. Today he focuses on raising his daughter, Jennea, as a single father and is dedicated to building his career as a solo artist.