

How One Man's Competitive Nature Landed Him in an Iranian Jail—and Beyond

"You know, I am a really competitive person. When I was in the Iran Army during the Iran-Iraq War, I told my commander, 'Send me to the place where I can be martyred for my country within 24 hours. I don't want to waste my time; I just want to go where the fighting is the fiercest.'"

The man who told Todd Nettleton of Voice of the Martyrs this story was an Iranian named Iman. And Iman had much more to say, Nettleton tells Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network—a "more" that should challenge every follower of Christ.

"When I was a drug addict, I wanted to use more drugs than anyone else was using, and I wanted to use every single drug that anyone could use," Iman told Nettleton. "I wanted to be the best drug addict in the world."

But this Iranian had still more to say.

"When I was a thief, I wanted to be the best thief in the world," Iman said. "I wanted to steal more than anyone else was stealing. And if someone else tried to steal something and was caught, I would try to go and steal that thing just to prove that I was a better thief than the first guy."

But then, Nettleton says, "Iman had an amazing powerful encounter with Jesus Christ. And Jesus healed him of that drug addiction, completely took away the desire for any drugs, any narcotics, any anything—just healed him. And Iman was transformed into a follower of Christ.

"Iman was a very competitive person; he doesn't want to be an

average follower of Christ,” Nettleton reminds listeners. “He wants to be the best follower of Christ that he could possibly be. He doesn’t want to be an average evangelist. He wants to tell every single person that he ever meets or ever talks to about Jesus and about how Jesus healed him, and how Jesus died for them. And so he has this competitive desire to be a follower of Christ.”

But this time, Iman’s competitive nature landed him in jail. When you live in Iran and become a zealous follower of Jesus, that’s where you end up, Nettleton says.

“Iman did end up in jail,” he adds. “In fact, they put him in solitary confinement. And then they put him in a cell with 100 other prisoners. And during the week that he was in that cell, he was able to share Christ with all 100 of his fellow prisoners, and 24 of them knelt and prayed with him to receive Christ and to renounce their old life.

Iman was released from prison, and Nettleton says, “The guards had to chase him out because he was having such an amazing ministry.”

That month, Iman sent in his monthly ministry report to his church leadership, showing that he had shared Christ with 100 people, and 24 had received Christ.

“Several weeks later, his ministry leadership understood that he had been arrested, that he’d gone to prison,” Nettleton says. When they asked Iman why he hadn’t told them about his ordeal, he was incredulous.

“Why does that matter?” Iman asked. “Why does it matter when I was sharing Christ? I shared Christ with 100 people, and 24 of them prayed to receive Christ.

“That’s the important part; that’s the part I reported,” Iman said. “Now where that happened? That’s completely immaterial. Who cares if it was in prison?”

✖ For more inspiring stories from Todd Nettleton of Voice of the Martyrs, listen to the entire episode of the *Greenelines* podcast, and be sure to subscribe to *Greenelines* on your favorite podcast platform for more inspiring stories. To read more about Iman and other heroes of the faith, check out Nettleton's new book, *When Faith Is Forbidden*, wherever good books are sold. You'll also want to listen to his podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, *Forbidden Faith*. {eoa}

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