

ROOTED



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June 2024 Graduate

I was born into a family of 5 children. Despite our precarious financial situation, my parents strived to provide us with a proper education and ensured that we attended school and church regularly. However, my parents' busy lifestyles made it difficult for them to keep an eye on us. I started hanging out with friends, embracing their values and choices, and became resentful about attending church.

When I turned 18, I began gambling and drinking. I lost all respect for my parents and was insubordinate. My addictions multiplied, and I spent my time watching porn and getting high. I started skipping school and hanging out with an even rougher crowd. As my life spiraled downward, I joined a gang and engaged in abusive behavior toward others. Crime and cruelty didn't mean anything to me; my eyes were closed to sin, and pride dominated my life.

Life was meaningless. I knew I was lost and asked God to help me find another direction. He led me to an HTC graduate who shared his story. Despite my stubbornness, the Holy Spirit convinced me to enroll at HTC. The program was challenging for me; my life as a gang member meant I fought hard against the daily schedule, disciplines, and principles taught in the Men's Program. I didn't think I could change, but HTC graduates and leaders helped me understand that my life could be different, and despite the harm I caused my family and community in the past, a different future was available to me in Christ.

I used to dream of becoming a notorious gang leader who made money dealing drugs. Now, I am freed from my addictions and plan to study industrial mechanics so that I can help my community and take care of my family. I want to be a witness for God, telling others how the Lord saved and transformed my life and encouraging other young men and women not to fall into the dishonest life I did.

I thank God for His compassion. **In the midst of it all, His goodness was always chasing me.** I can live a new life today because Christ lives in me.



95%

of students accept
or renew their
commitment to Christ
prior to graduating



97%

of students graduated
from the program in
the past year



188

young men and women were
served in the past year¹

¹Includes students enrolled in the 18-month recovery program and graduates engaged in internships and/or ongoing education