

# Don't Be "Taken"

Sixteen-year-old Chelsea is serving thirteen months in a youth prison for thirteen months for gang-banging and drug usage. Months before discharge, Chelsea wants to share her story so that others her age won't be 'taken for a mug.'

## A Long Hard Journey

Chelsea was raped at three years old. Her mother had mental health issues and wasn't mentally present in Chelsea's life. She does remember periods of a loving relationship with her grandma, who she still connects with regularly. No one probably can understand the intensity of being violated at such a young age other than those who have suffered something similar, but Chelsea does remember that she was often angry. But she recalls once when she was very young, crying while with her grandma, put a bunch of sticky notes all over her, and then taking her picture. Chelsea says she still has that picture, and when she talks about it, she smiles, as if she can still sense her grandmother's love. She does have memories of a positive male figure in her life who was like a stepfather to her for a period of time.

## Interview with Chelsea B



# Chelsea's Terrifying Experience



It might be hard to imagine why the gang life and fighting became a significant part of her life. But life for Chelsea has definitely been challenging, and like all of us, she tried to figure out the best way to survive based on the knowledge she had at the time. When she was about 14 years old, Chelsea was again raped, but this time by three adult men. Chelsea decided to testify against them to send the message that no one should be allowed to take advantage of younger girls like her. She doesn't want any girl to be 'taken for a mug' or to be excessively gullible. "I don't like people being taken advantage of by others—it hurts!" Chelsea believes her speaking up is a way of protecting and clarifying to other girls that you do not have to accept any kind of abuse. She says she wants teens like herself out in the world to know that even with their troubles that they can turn their lives around.

## Looking Back At How God Helped Her

Chelsea says she vividly remembers that horrible incident of being raped by the three men and believed that she would die. She said I called on God to help me. "God calmed me down and told me that help is on the way," and the 'cops' arrived within minutes. Chelsea says I realized that change could come in my life at that moment. I remember God telling me that He is not going to stop loving me for who I am. Chelsea recovered and is continuing to recover. She says I've been having an ongoing conversations with God ever since. He told me He's going to guide me when and where I need it.

Chelsea says I prays to God every single day. When I'm in a bad situation and feel down, I pray that He helps me out of those thoughts. He tells me to continue with my life and not to just give up. She describes that God has made it plain to her that He loves her no matter what happens, and He will always be there. She is growing in her relationship as she now realizes that He is there no matter what.

She says I used to be the type of kid who didn't want to seek help from God. But now, it like He's there, with me all the time. I can look to God anytime and know every time and know that He's there. Chelsea says it shocked me at first that I have God, near me all the time. But she says I had to learn to look to Him not only in times of trouble but to also know I have God as a friend who is right there with me.

## Thoughts Of Going Home. . .

Although the struggles have been many, Chelsea says there have been many pleasant times, being sister to her three younger brothers (7, 8, and 15 years old), whom she has cared for since she was 11 years old.

She sometimes had to fend for them; to make sure they had the things they needed and to make sure they were safe. Even though she is incarcerated, Chelsea is showing her brothers that the change towards her becoming a good sister is the making. Chelsie says that when she gets home, many things will be different, although it may be scary for a while because the world and things in her life will be wildly different.





# Understanding True Love

Chelsea says she is now growing in her understanding of God's great love for her and how, before she was even conceived He had His Son, Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for anything that any of us could do wrong. Chelsea said when I accepted Christ, it settled the score so that my fellowship with God is continuous. It is just a matter of my allowing Him to assist me. Chelsea's long journey has a new twist to it because now God will lead her through any difficult days ahead as she returns to the community. But this time, Chelsea says I am aware of who walks beside me now as I allow Him to be my constant companion.

Our prayer for Chelsea is that she will "Trust the Lord completely, and don't depend on your knowledge" and "With every step you take, think about what he wants, and he will help you go the right way." Proverbs 3:5-6 (ERV)



## What Brings Chelsea B

# JOY

Chelsea's relationship with God has kept her while she has been incarcerated, and she believes He will be with her to stabilize her when she goes back into the community. As she prepares to return to the outside world, she recognizes the challenges and is dependent on God's help.

Through all her difficulties, Chelsea speaks joyfully of what brings a smile to her face. She says I love working with children and I'm excited about getting home to spend time with my brothers and other children in the community. Her face lights as she tells of her favorite dessert Cherry Crisp, so it is no



surprise that her favorite color is red. This lady of red enjoys looking good and doing hair and makeup for herself and others.

Chelsea knows she excels in this area and plans to be a cosmetologist. As for her favorite pets, she says she takes to Bull Dogs, Old English and her sports heroes are the Green Bay Packers.



**As we remind you of Chelsea's message to not be 'taken for a mug' and be excessively gullible—she says, ask God to help you, we pray that Chelsea remembers how much God loves her and recalls all He has done to make sure she knows He is her friend. It would be best if you did the same.**