

You've Come A Long Way, Baby



“Along the way, many people have had a part in my life. If they had given up, I wouldn’t be here today.”

She was a hardcore drug addict. Thirty years of drug addiction had hardened into a lifestyle, embedded into her bones and blood. She was arrested on drug-related offences and sentenced to imprisonment over 10 times.

“There’s no point changing. Most of my life has already been wasted on drugs. I might as well take drugs until the day I die.” Well into her fifties, after two failed attempts at rehabilitation, without family and friends, Thyrza* was yielding to thoughts of hitting the “Give Up” button and being done with life.

On Christmas Eve of 2016, Thyrza was again arrested. Led to the dark prison cell, she saw “God is good” chiselled on the wall by a previous occupant. A deep remorse rose within her and tears began to fall. She sensed the warm presence of God was with her in the darkness, assuring her, “All is not lost.”

While a seed of hope began to steady her heart, painful news gave her the vital push to finally change course. In the same week of her arrest, the tragic death of her fellow colleague, who was also a long-time drug addict, shook her. She

came to realise if she were to go on in the same way, her story would have a similarly sad ending.

Today, Thyrza is working at a home for underprivileged children, and recently received a pay raise for her outstanding performance. She feels good about herself. *“I didn’t expect to come this far.”*

“Other than God, I am most grateful to sister Carol. She never gave up on me since she first knew me in prison Bible class. Carol always showed up for me each time I was arrested.” Carol, now retired from Malaysian Care, ministered to women prisoners like Thyrza for 26 years. Recalling the kindness of volunteers and staff of Malaysian Care, Thyrza says, *“Along the way, many people have had a part in my life. If they had given up, I wouldn’t be here today.”*

She is grateful for the kindness she has received and desires to pass on the blessings: *“Even if I just did one good thing with the years left in me, I would be happy when I meet God.”*

Thyrza believes she is living out her last chance and tells herself, *“Don’t mess it up.”* ■

*Note: Name has been altered in protection of identity.

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