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'What if ...' you had a second chance?

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September 4, 2010

What if you chose the wrong path in life and missed your spiritual calling? What if you had a second chance to answer it?

That is the premise of a new faith-focused film opening this weekend at Madison's Malco Grandview Theater called What if ...

We asked Mississippians that question, and here are some of their responses.

Jim Adams III

Jim Adams III was a Delta State University star athlete who graduated in 1984 and spent 17 years as vice president of sales and marketing for The Principal Financial Group, a Fortune 500 insurance company.

Recognized as one of the Top 40 businessmen under 40 in the state, Adams was also an entrepreneur who founded several businesses.

When his pastor suggested he become a minister, Adams said to himself, "That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. You don't get paid anything to work in the ministry. That's not what I want to do."

In 2002, the insurance company made some financial decisions that forced Adams to choose relocation or early severance.

"I basically took about six months to see what I really wanted to do," he said, "and (wife) Teresa and I enrolled in Reformed Theological Seminary."

Adams left after a semester and used the family's entire savings, \$230,000, to start a real estate business.

"In 2007 and 2008, when the economic bubble started bursting, I lost everything," he said. "I had sold most of my investment property by then, and we went bankrupt."

His vehicles were repossessed. His home was in

foreclosure. He was jobless, homeless and at one point, pawned his wedding band to buy groceries for the family of six.

"I have been a millionaire, and I have been bankrupt," he said. "The Lord just closed every door, and the only door that opened was full-time ministry."

Adams has served the past year as the youth, marriage and family director at Jackson's New Hope Baptist Church, a congregation of about 2,500 families.

He works with his wife of 25 years, a marriage and family therapist. Together, they founded Family Matters First, a ministry that works to strengthen relationships.

Adams is also a certified Christian financial counselor and a 10 Great Dates facilitator.

"I still struggle from time to time about being a minister," he said, "but I get confirmation over and over that this is what God wants me to do."

"For example: At one point, my wife and children and I were sharing a vehicle. Shortly afterward, we won a car."

While registering for a half marathon, Teresa Adams entered a vehicle drawing.

"Then, I wondered how I would pay for my

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daughter's college," he said. "And she was one of the people in the country awarded a Gates Millennium Scholarship that allows her to go to school anywhere in the country.

"I had big plans about what I was going to do with my life, and only now have I begun to think maybe I have really been promoted as opposed to demoted.

"I am making in a year what I used to make in a month, but the lives we have touched have been really fulfilling"

Woodrow Price

Woodville native Woodrow Price struggled as an elementary student and failed fourth through seventh grades. Summer school enabled him to catch up each year.

"For me, (Wilkinson County High School) was a whole lot different," he said. "I was around people who cared about learning. The work was more interesting. In 12th grade, I was selected as Most Likely to Succeed."

Price attended Alcorn State University planning to major in agricultural economics.

"I thought there were a lot of opportunities in that field that would pay, but I had this ill feeling telling me that was not what I needed to do," he said. "While filling out my schedule that summer, I heard a voice from God and was told to go into the field of elementary education.

"I didn't want to go into education because of my experience in the education field, but I followed God's orders and, today, I am a fifth-grade teacher. My second year as a teacher, I was named District Teacher of the Year."

Price, 28, teaches at A.W. Watson Elementary School in Claiborne County.

"When I'm teaching, if students are behind, I cannot go on and leave them," he said. "I always cling to those students who have a problem because I see myself.

"Before we leave, every day they have to say the class motto: 'I am somebody. I am somebody. And failure is not an option.'"

Roderick Richardson

Roderick Richardson earned degrees in political science, business and community development.

He once worked as the director of injury and violence prevention for the state Department of Health and had planned on becoming an attorney until he felt called to the ministry.

"I sacrificed what would be a very secure career to follow my dreams," he said. "All the things I feel I've learned within the last six to 10 years, I'm now able to apply to ministry - from business to community development."

On June 6, Richardson, 32, and his wife, Tyronda, founded The Word Center that meets in Jackson's Calloway High School auditorium. They started with three families and now have about 70 members.

"I was a top employee," he said. "All those things came easy to me, but there still wasn't a satisfaction. Now that I am a senior pastor, there is."

What if he hadn't pursued his calling?

"I personally believe," he said, "it would have always been like searching for something and never finding it."

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Jim Adams III was once a millionaire. He and his wife, Teresa, a marriage and family therapist, recently founded Family Matters First. (Brian Albert Broom/The Clarion-Ledger)

Show times are 1:05, 4, 7 and 9:40 p.m.

For more information, visit thewhatifmovie.com.

The director

What if ... was directed by Dallas Jenkins, 25, whose father is executive producer Jerry B. Jenkins - a New York Times best-selling author and co-author of the Left Behind series.

Dallas Jenkins recently accepted a position as director of visual media at Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago, where he will produce and direct multiple films starting in 2011.

The church's vision is to create faith-based films with high production value.

Dallas attended Northwestern Biblical and Liberal Arts College in Roseville, Minn.

The premise?

What if ... tells the story of Ben Walker (Kevin Sorbo), who left the love of his life (Kristy Swanson) 15 years ago and his calling to the ministry for a lucrative business opportunity.

Now, with a promotion and beautiful fiancée, he has no desire for faith or family until an angelic mechanic (John Ratzenberger) shows him what life would have been like if he had followed his true calling.

"We are hoping for a six- to eight-week run at Malco Grandview and are planning to use the success of our first weekend at Malco to book UA Clinton 10, which is a Regal Theater," said Brent Johnson, CEO of 7 Day Media, the company handling the film's production locally.

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Mom Dilemma #36:
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

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