

JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison



SEPTEMBER 2018

Dear Mentor,

Raymond has been behind bars for more than a decade. He is serving a sentence that will leave him incarcerated until his last day here on earth.

My wife, Hendrina, and I have had the privilege of getting to know him the past several years during our visits to the prison. He always shares kind words, exudes positivity and demonstrates a hunger to learn about being a leader among his peers.

One day, as he and I worked on a special project together, we talked about the future. He began to share with me how difficult it is to accept the fact he will be incarcerated for the rest of his natural life.

And the tears began to flow.

Yet he could see a redemptive purpose in his suffering. He has the opportunity to reach others for Christ right where he is. I could see how the Holy Spirit was working in Raymond, opening his eyes to the brokenness in his prison facility and to ways that he can be an agent of healing and change.

It is difficult for me to wrap my mind around what the journey of a long prison sentence would be like. If I were in Raymond's situation, how would I persevere and remain healthy in mind and spirit? Would I have to fight against becoming bitter? Could I instead grow to be a positive influencer?

Here are few tips to keep in mind when writing to a prisoner with a long sentence:

- Show empathy as you respond to the thoughts they share about their situation.
- Remind them that God can redeem their time in prison and that they can be a leader and ambassador for Christ in their facility.
- Let them know you will pray for opportunities for them to share positive guidance and perspective with those who may be new to prison, especially those who are younger.
- Remember that it is appropriate—even healthy—to talk about life outside prison. I haven't met a prisoner yet who wouldn't want to hear about life outside their walls.

No matter how long your student's sentence is, you can offer them a powerful reminder to continue to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).

As you write to your students this month, I want to encourage you to share what it looks like for you to produce these fruits in your life, and then encourage your students to do the same as they strive to have a positive influence on those around them.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

Have a question? You can contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450.



SERVING MORE TOGETHER

Each time I walk past the bins of student lessons that we have received from prisoners across the country, I give thanks to you for faithfully sharing your heart with students as you review their lessons. We have worked hard to remove barriers that kept prisoners from participating with Crossroads so we can share hope, encouragement and biblical truth with them, and students are responding! Our office has been overflowing with lessons since we began paying for student postage earlier this year. Many of you have responded to our call to correspond with additional students as the number of students increases. Thank you!

We know that we need to increase our number of mentors as well. We have set a God-sized goal of **doubling our number** of mentors. Currently, thousands of completed lessons are in our office just waiting to be sent to mentors. Each of these lessons represents a student who is eager to connect with someone on the outside and to know God more deeply.

We need your help to invite new Crossroads mentors to journey alongside these students. If each of you could encourage one more person to sign up and join our team of volunteer mentors, we will double our number of mentors and double our impact!

We are calling this campaign **WE over ME**. We know that we can accomplish so much more together than each of us can on our own! In the coming weeks, you will receive an important mailing from us with tips on how to invite your friends to join Crossroads and some resources for you as you share the Crossroads story.

The campaign seeks to emphasize:

- Our continued goal of building a community of mentors doing ministry together.
- The power of your story as you share with others what it means to you to reach out to people in prison with encouragement and the Good News.
- The amazing growth our ministry is experiencing and your important role in helping us serve even more men and women in prison.

What I have found through my years of prison ministry is that people are willing to serve others—they just need to be asked *after* hearing a powerful story! We are looking forward to this with great anticipation and want to **thank you in advance** as you consider your part in this campaign. I want to encourage you to think about someone you can invite to join you as we work together to accomplish this God-sized goal.

With gratitude,
Douglas Cupery

PARTNERSHIP WITH COFFEE BREAK MINISTRIES

We are working on some exciting projects right now in the curriculum department! Several months ago, we began a partnership with Coffee Break Ministries. Coffee Break has fifty years of experience supporting small group Bible studies that are centered on evangelism and discipleship. Our partnership allows us to use six studies from their Discover Your Bible series. The studies focus on the books of Genesis, Ruth, Nehemiah, Jonah, Mark and Colossians.

Coffee Break has also given us permission to adapt the studies for our ministry's context and add prisoner-specific content to those lessons, which will help students apply the biblical truths they are studying to their lives. We are working to adapt *Discover Jonah* and *Discover Ruth* for our curriculum.

In the meantime, it might be helpful for you to explore the style and content of the Discover Your Bible series. You might consider trying a study with a small group in your church or neighborhood. Coffee Break is providing a special 20% off discount for Crossroads mentors on a single order. Go to faithaliveresources.org and look at the variety of Discover Your Bible studies under the Adults/Small Groups tab. When you make your purchase, use the coupon code **MENTOR18**. Let us know what you think about the studies!

Coupon code is valid until December 31, 2018, for one order.