

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



MARCH 2020

Dear Mentor,

Recently, a mentor I'll call Susan shared part of her faith story with me. Susan grew up with two loving parents, but she always felt somewhat disconnected from them. Although she could never quite put her finger on it, she said, "something was off."

As an adult, she moved out of her parents' house. Within a week of moving out, she received a life-changing phone call from her uncle. He told her that her mother and father were not her biological parents. He then dropped the bombshell that he and her aunt were actually her parents. This shook Susan to her core.

The news sent her on a journey of wrestling with her identity. *How can this be true? Who can I trust? Why didn't they tell me until now?*

*Who am I?*

My wife and I facilitate a group in a state prison, and our discussions often revolve around identity. The men in our group are also students in the Crossroads program and just received lesson 1 of *Who Are You?* They were excited to describe how they were filling up the pages with their thoughts. But three of them admitted they got stuck when they read question 4:

"Who are you?"

"I always felt my identity was what people told me it was," one man said. But he is beginning to realize that's a lie.

Our students may find their identity in being a mother, father, daughter or son. Some may identify themselves as a failure, an addict or a loser. Many people who are incarcerated go through a long, difficult journey to discover their core belief of who they are. This can be a painful process. Some might not even know where to begin.

I understand what that's like. My false sense of identity finally shifted when I began to understand who I was in Christ and grasp what it meant that I had been made new. From time to time, I still need a reminder of who I am in Christ. I think we all need reminders sometimes.

Here are my tips for you this month:

- Remind your student that they are a child of God. Share what it means to you to be a child of God and what you do when you doubt this truth. *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:12).
- Assure your student that God loves them so much, they are worth dying for. Share what this truth means to you. *"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:7-8).
- Tell your student that in Christ, they are made new! They are not defined by their past. They are not defined by their crime. Rather, their identity and value are rooted in the blood of Jesus, which was shed so they could live free from shame. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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One night, several years after discovering who her real parents were, Susan had a dream.

She believes God came to her in this dream. Through this encounter with God, she realized that she had a new identity. Through Christ, she is a child of God—a child of the King. She is a new creation. She is deeply loved and treasured. This knowledge helped her begin to heal. And she continues to heal further as she acts as Christ's ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20), reaching others behind prison walls and helping them discover their identity in Christ.

Many of our students struggle with a false sense of identity. But I would argue that they are not alone. Do you understand who you are? Are you living out that identity?

Serving alongside you,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Cupery".

Douglas Cupery  
Church Mobilization Director

Don't forget to RSVP for the  
**Ignite Unite Volunteer Summit** on  
April 25! Register by April 6 at  
[cpministries.org/ignite-unite](http://cpministries.org/ignite-unite).  
We hope to see you there!

**Have a question?** You can contact the mentor support team at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) or 800-668-2450.

## Help Us Grow the Crossroads Mentor Team!

Crossroads' mission is to connect men and women in prison with mentors on the outside in Christ-centered relationships so that lives, prisons and churches are restored through the Gospel. We believe that Christ-centered relationships change everything. They change hearts, minds and entire institutions.

At Crossroads, we consistently hear stories of incarcerated men and women experiencing total life change. We also witness transformations among the men and women who mentor them. The stories of the most powerful and long-lasting transformations have a common theme: the student and mentor were in a one-on-one, long-term relationship in Tier 2 or Tier 3.

In order to foster more transformative relationships between students and mentors, we would like to introduce the one-on-one mentoring component earlier in each student's journey with Crossroads.

**To make this a reality, we have determined that we need to add 2,500 new mentors to the Crossroads team. Will you help us make this happen?** Who in your life might make a great mentor? Maybe a family member or someone who goes to your church is coming to mind. Will you personally meet with them, tell them why you love serving with Crossroads and invite them to join you as a mentor?

Tier 1 mentors, would you consider mentoring a Tier 2 student as well? If you would like to serve in this way, please contact the mentor support team at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org).

We are calling this endeavor the **Timothy Project**. Timothy was a disciple of the apostle Paul. Through a close relationship—fostered in part through letter writing—both Timothy and Paul became close followers of Jesus and faithful leaders in God's Kingdom. We believe God is calling us to foster even more close friendships between students and mentors—friendships that are similar to Timothy and Paul's.

Will you join us in making this a reality by helping us find more mentors to come alongside men and women in prison? Watch your mailbox for more information about this important mentor recruitment campaign and ways that you can get involved!