

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Mentor,

After someone has been released from prison, they are still not completely free. Invisible punishments, which were most likely not disclosed prior to their sentencing and incarceration, have a massive impact on their life after their release. These punishments are known as collateral consequences of criminal convictions.

According to The Sentencing Project (sentencingproject.org), there are over 44,000 collateral consequences that affect not only our students but also their families. I will be bold enough to say that they have a detrimental effect on all of us.

Some of these restrictions involve professional licensing, employment, voting, volunteering and educational opportunities. More than 1,000 are related to housing barriers. For example, many apartment complexes do not allow anyone with a criminal conviction to live on their properties. This contributes to homelessness for people with convictions and their families.

When our students are released, many will be caught off guard by these unforeseen obstacles, and they may become highly discouraged as they try to reintegrate into society. It is important that they prepare for those challenges in advance by incorporating calming and centering practices into their daily routines while they are incarcerated.

As you prepare to write your next letter, consider these suggestions:

- Encourage your student to begin their day by taking a prayer walk, reading Scripture or listening to uplifting music. Encourage them to think about the day ahead to consider what they can control and then surrender what they can't. Developing healthy rhythms and routines can decrease stress and contribute to better coping abilities, which can help them navigate the daily challenges of prison life. They can also carry these routines with them once they have been released and face the stresses of reentry.
- Share how you incorporate healthy routines in your own life and how this has helped you when you have faced obstacles. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

You may not have thought about your role as a mentor in preparing your students for reentry. But each encouraging letter you send contributes to a solid biblical foundation that can help them trust God for support as they navigate the invisible punishments that await them upon release.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

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.

NEWS & NOTES

Mentor Community Gatherings

This month, we will focus on prayer. We will discuss how to approach moments when we do not know what to pray for as we write to our students.

Tuesday, February 16, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, February 17, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84182956475?pwd=QWs1OGlYZTZlejVOSkcyOEc5NW9SUT09>

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

New Tier 1 Courses Coming Soon

In the last *Just for Mentors* newsletter, we briefly introduced two new courses that will join our Tier 1 curriculum in 2021: *Who Is Jesus?* and *What Is the Bible?* Students will take these courses after *Who Are You?* and then continue to *Great Truths of the Bible* after finishing the new courses. Both courses were created in partnership with BibleProject, a nonprofit organization that produces free animated videos about biblical stories and concepts. You can learn more about the ministry and explore their videos at bibleproject.com.

Who Is Jesus? guides students through the Gospel of Luke toward a deeper understanding of Jesus. Students will read about Jesus' earthly mission and learn how His death and resurrection offer eternal life to all who believe in Him.

What Is the Bible? introduces students to the grand story of the Bible—from creation to revelation—and how each person fits into that story. Students will learn how to navigate the Bible and read Scripture as they pursue spiritual growth.

We will send you an informational packet about these courses before we launch them.

Letter-Writing Tip: Ask Questions!

Jesus asked many good questions, and so can we! Questions can stimulate reflection and encourage students to reveal things they may not have considered sharing. In each letter you write, ask a question about your student's life, their dreams or their thoughts about who they are in Jesus. Their response may help you or the next mentor who writes to them.