

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JANUARY 2022

Dear Mentor,

Although snow had fallen, the leaves were still clinging to the tree branches, which seemed later than usual. They continued to give us a glimpse of autumn that would soon transition to winter. I looked out at the gray skies as we visited Hendrina's father in a hospice care facility. Her father was a reserved man, a good man, who had lived stories that one could find in history books.

Soon, his pain and discomfort waned as the time had come for him to be with Jesus. While grieving, we also rejoiced in a life well lived and the assurance of his eternal life with the Lord.

During this time, our son's wife had been dealing with a difficult pregnancy. Our granddaughter was born very prematurely. She was so incredibly tiny, and her future was uncertain. But, through nothing short of a miracle, she is now growing strong and has a wonderful life ahead of her.

As Hendrina's father left this earth and our granddaughter arrived, we saw life renewed. We were reminded that life is fleeting and filled with uncertainty. This has given us an opportunity to reflect on what is important and examine our priorities. It reminded us to treasure the gift of life and to invest time, energy and love into the people in our lives.

Our students also experienced a life-altering event when they were incarcerated. Many of them responded by taking a hard look at their lives and reevaluating their priorities. Many have a desire to set goals in their personal life, spiritual life or career but have struggled to do so in the past. The struggle to establish goals and priorities continues in prison, where they are constantly facing discouragement, chaos and the threat of violence.

As you prepare to write to your student, consider approaching the subject of setting goals. Offer a couple of steps to begin this process:

- Encourage your student to seek God's heart in all their plans. It is healthy to set goals and continue to grow in areas of our lives, but whatever plans we have should be held with open hands. Invite your student to ask the Lord for guidance as they strive to discern His will for their life. *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps" (Proverbs 16:9).*
- Encourage your student to make a list of priorities and possible steps to get there. Putting these down on paper, rather than just thinking about them, will allow your student to visualize what it will take to achieve their goals and help them track their progress. Suggest setting deadlines.

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- Encourage your student to commit to doing the hard work as they implement these steps, remembering that God is with them the whole way. Though we need to have faith that God will lead, provide and open doors, we also need to do our part. Throughout Scripture are examples of men and women who had a clear calling from God but needed to take the first step themselves. *“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans” (Proverbs 16:3).*

Serving alongside you,



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

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

Join us as we gather virtually to equip and empower one another to serve our students well.

Tuesday, January 18, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, January 19, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Book Recommendation

Each year, more than half a million Americans are released from prison and join a population of twenty million people who live with a felony record.

Reuben Miller, a chaplain at the Cook County Jail in Chicago and now a sociologist studying mass incarceration, spent years alongside prisoners, ex-prisoners, their friends and their families to understand the lifelong burden that even a single arrest can entail. What his work revealed is a simple, if overlooked, truth: life after incarceration is its own form of prison.

If you are looking for an enlightening read, check out *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration* by Reuben Miller. Please note that this book contains coarse language.

January Series

Also, make sure to check out Reuben Miller's presentation during the January Series at Calvin University on January 13 at 12:30 p.m. Crossroads will have a table at the event and will host a discussion in the Prince Conference Center after the presentation. If you are unable to attend in person, you can watch Reuben's talk online at calvin.edu/january-series.