

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



MARCH 2022

Dear Mentor,

I recently read a letter from a student thanking Crossroads for sending a Christmas card to him. As I read his words, I was reminded that often, when someone shares difficult parts of their personal story, it is because they are longing to be restored.

In his letter, Mark M. wrote about his relationship with his children:

*"I am kept in the dark as to their development, condition, status and well-being. It is my own fault as a sinner, I know, yet it is extremely difficult to bear. Each morning, the thought of ending it all enters my mind, and each day, it is Christ who expels it. I pray morning, noon and night for my children and for my ex-wives, who continuously make the choice each day to add another bucket of silence into what is now a vast ocean, filled with my tears and atop which floats my little messages in glass bottles—all the tokens of my love for them that I send in the mail, each one sealed with the prayer that it might reach its intended destination."*

A longing for restoration can show up in different ways for each of our students. Some, like Mark, can articulate their longing well. However, other students may share their personal stories in fragments—through a brief comment or prayer request in their lesson—and we must look for it. It can be helpful to remember that they may be putting their pain down on paper for the very first time.

A common theme we see in our students' words is that they harbor guilt and have a hard time accepting God's forgiveness of their sins. I am reminded of David's words in Psalm 86: "You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you" (Psalm 86:5).

As you prepare to write a letter to your student, consider sharing stories of restoration from Scripture. As I write this, the beautiful words of Psalm 32:1 come to mind: "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Remind your student that our God is a God of restoration. He comforts us when we are in pain (2 Corinthians 1:3–11), and He can bring good from evil (Romans 8:28). Challenge your student to take time to write down the unresolved difficulties within their personal story and to think about the times when they have seen God at work.

We don't know the details of what brought Mark and his relationships to this point, but his grief and pain are evident. It is also clear he is looking for restoration—and that God is at the center of his hope.

I invite you to look for similar themes within the words of your students and to lovingly encourage them if they have not yet discovered the hope that Christ offers.

*(Continued on back page)*

“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:17–18).

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](mailto: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! This month, we are excited to welcome Joe Pryor, Crossroads' new president and CEO, as our speaker.

Tuesday, March 15, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, March 16, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

### Introducing Crossroads' Next Leader

After a thorough nationwide search, Crossroads' board of directors has unanimously selected Joe Pryor to be our next president and CEO, effective February 3, 2022. Lisa Blystra is retiring after six years of faithful and dedicated service, and we are grateful for her visionary and transformative leadership. To learn more about Joe, read the announcement letter at [cpministries.org/news/introducing-crossroads-next-ceo](https://cpministries.org/news/introducing-crossroads-next-ceo).

### Mentor Recruitment Campaign

To address our urgent, growing need for mentors, we will soon be launching a mentor recruitment campaign called the Timothy Project. Based on the biblical account of Timothy and Paul, the campaign will focus on one-on-one mentoring relationships. We hope you will be blessed through this campaign as you share stories of your friendships with Crossroads students and invite others to join you in this ministry.

### Additional Training Resources Available through the CMCA

If you are looking for training and resources to further equip you for ministry, we encourage you to check out the Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association (CMCA) website. Crossroads is an organizational member of the CMCA. To receive emails about resources and training, fill out the form at [cmcainternational.org/contact](https://cmcainternational.org/contact) and write "Add to email list" in the comments section. You can also explore the Member Benefits page to see if you (or your church) want to join.

### Bible Reading Plan in *Just for Students*

This month's *Just for Students* newsletter includes a daily Bible reading plan for students to follow until Easter. If you'd like to follow along with your students, you can download the latest newsletter at [cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-students](https://cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-students).