

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



SEPTEMBER 2022

Dear Mentor,

Years ago, when I was incarcerated and approaching my parole hearing, I had hopes that I could go home to my family. Why should they keep me there? I had done everything that was asked of me, I did the best I could each day, and I had taken great pains to reflect on who I was and where I was going. During my incarceration, I spent a lot of time discovering who Jesus wanted me to be. He often revealed Himself through the words of my family and church members on the outside and through the support of the men attending our facility's church.

I had already put my family and many others through so much pain, so when the parole board responded with a denial, I was shattered. How would I share this devastating news with my wife, Hendrina?

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

All of us have faced or will face trials that threaten to overwhelm us and test our faith. During these seasons, God can seem distant, unforgiving, or not in control of our circumstances. As a mentor, you will likely hear from students who are struggling to see how God is working in their circumstances. You may hear from a student that their judge seemed unfair and did not take the whole story into consideration, or you may be told that a student's appeal against their sentencing failed. Tragically, you may be told that a student's parent or child has died. Or, as I told my mentor, you may hear that a student's parole was denied. When our faith is tested by things out of our control, it can be easy to listen to Satan's lies (John 8:44).

Rarely do we feel like we have the perfect answer or solution for our students' specific circumstances, however unfair or difficult they may be. Yet we do have promises we can share: God will strengthen us and help us (Isaiah 41:10). In Jesus, we have peace (John 16:33). God will give us rest (Matthew 11:28-29). Through our trials, we must find the strength to persevere. Scripture can offer comfort and hope, helping us stand firm in Him even if the circumstances seem insurmountable (1 Peter 5:6-10).

I always try to remind myself of the simple phrase, "God's got it." While my circumstances may not make sense and may hurt terribly, I know that He has it, whatever "it" is. Our responsibility when we face trials is to trust God and persevere. Through this, we honor ourselves, we honor those we love, and, most of all, we honor God.

Even though I had read James 1:2-4 many times, there was no joy to be found when I called Hendrina to let her know that I would not be released. My heart broke as I shared the news. In the days that followed, I struggled not to become angry. However, in the years after my release, when I reflected on that season, I found many gifts within the heartache I experienced.

As I anticipate the next time my faith is tested, I pray I hold on to the truth that "God's got it." Encourage your students to do the same.

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

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

Tuesday, September 20, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, September 21, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Course Designed for Students in Jail

Because the average stay in jail is twenty-one days, many students that enroll from jail only have time to complete one Crossroads lesson. Recently, we created a new version of our course *Who Are You?* by reformatting it into a single booklet called *The Three Big Questions*, and we tested it with students in jail. During this pilot test, the number of students in jail who were able to complete the course more than doubled. As 30 percent of new Crossroads students enroll from a jail facility, this is a significant new initiative. We are expecting to make the new course available this fall.

Collective Scripture Reading and Prayer

We have received positive feedback from many of our students about the Scripture reading and prayer guide included in each *Just for Students* newsletter. We are inviting mentors and Crossroads staff to read and pray along with them. You will find a copy of the September–October guide enclosed.

In September and October, we will be reading through the Gospel of John together. Each Gospel was written for a specific audience. John's Gospel was written to tell the story of Jesus to Gentiles, or non-Jewish believers, who might not have understood all of Matthew's references to Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Jewish people. John introduced Jesus as the "Word" who had come to earth in the flesh. The Greek word *logos*, translated as "the Word," was familiar to the Greek philosophers of Jesus' time. *Logos* was understood by the Greeks to be the intelligence behind the creation of the universe. John shared with his readers that the *logos*, or intelligence, responsible for creating the universe was Jesus.

Scripture Reading and Prayer Guide: September–October

Date	Passage	Reading Topic	Prayer Focus
Sept. 1	John 1:1–18	The Word became flesh	For the light of God to shine through you
Sept. 2	John 1:19–34	John the Baptist	For new Christians to be baptized
Sept. 3	John 1:35–42	Andrew and Peter follow Jesus	For a heart to follow Jesus wherever He leads
Sept. 4	John 1:43–50	Philip and Nathanael	To let Jesus reign as King in your life
Sept. 5	John 2:1–12	Jesus turns water to wine	For open eyes to see miracles
Sept. 6	John 2:13–25	Jesus clears the temple courts	For God to clear any impurities from your heart
Sept. 7	John 3:1–21	Jesus teaches Nicodemus	To be born anew each day
Sept. 8	John 3:22–36	John the Baptist testifies again	For an opportunity to share Jesus with someone
Sept. 9	John 4:1–26	Jesus and the Samaritan woman	To be able to worship God in Spirit and truth
Sept. 10	John 4:27–38	The disciples rejoin Jesus	For spiritual nourishment
Sept. 11	John 4:39–54	A miraculous healing	For strengthened belief
Sept. 12	John 5:1–15	The healing at the pool of Bethesda	To be healed from any physical or emotional pain
Sept. 13	John 5:16–30	Jesus' authority as the Son of God	To submit to Jesus' authority
Sept. 14	John 5:31–47	Testimonies about Jesus	For God to reveal something about Himself to you
Sept. 15	John 6:1–15	Jesus feeds the 5,000	For God to multiply (increase) His Spirit in you
Sept. 16	John 6:16–24	Jesus walks on water	For fearlessness in following Jesus
Sept. 17	John 6:25–40	Jesus, the bread of life	For Jesus to feed you with spiritual bread
Sept. 18	John 6:41–59	Jesus disputes with religious leaders	For our leaders to believe in Jesus and follow Him
Sept. 19	John 6:60–71	Many disciples desert Jesus	For strength to follow Jesus when it is difficult
Sept. 20	John 7:1–24	Jesus at the Festival of Tabernacles	For help not to judge others based on appearance
Sept. 21	John 7:25–44	Division about the Messiah	For rivers of living water to flow in and from you
Sept. 22	John 7:45–53	Unbelief of the religious leaders	For God to help you in your unbelief
Sept. 23	John 8:1–11	The woman caught in adultery	To have a heart of mercy toward others
Sept. 24	John 8:12–30	Disputes about Jesus	For God to make you a peacemaker
Sept. 25	John 8:31–47	Jesus challenges the Pharisees	That your love for God will increase
Sept. 26	John 8:48–59	Jesus' followers will never see death	That your life will glorify God
Sept. 27	John 9:1–12	Jesus heals a blind man	For God to heal someone you know who is sick
Sept. 28	John 9:13–34	Investigating Jesus' healing	That you will not doubt the works of God
Sept. 29	John 9:35–41	Spiritual blindness	For God to give you spiritual sight
Sept. 30	John 10:1–21	Jesus, the good shepherd	That you will allow Jesus to guide your life
Oct. 1	John 10:22–42	Another challenge from the leaders	For open ears to listen to Jesus' voice
Oct. 2	John 11:1–44	The death and resurrection of Lazarus	To love others the way Jesus loved Lazarus
Oct. 3	John 11:45–57	A plot to kill Jesus	For protection from Satan's attacks
Oct. 4	John 12:1–11	Jesus anointed at Bethany	For a generous heart to offer your best to Jesus
Oct. 5	John 12:12–19	Jesus' triumphal entry	To be humble like Jesus
Oct. 6	John 12:20–36	Jesus predicts His coming death	That you will walk in the light of God's truth
Oct. 7	John 12:37–50	The religious leaders reject Jesus	For those you know who do not believe in Jesus
Oct. 8	John 13:1–17	Jesus washes His disciples' feet	For the humility to serve others as Jesus did
Oct. 9	John 13:18–30	Jesus predicts His betrayal	For the strength to follow Jesus, no matter the cost
Oct. 10	John 13:31–38	Jesus predicts Peter's denial	That we will love each other as Jesus commanded
Oct. 11	John 14:1–14	Jesus comforts His disciples	For comfort for someone who is struggling
Oct. 12	John 14:15–21	Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit	For God to fill you with the Holy Spirit
Oct. 13	John 14:22–31	Jesus is going to the Father	That Jesus will give you peace
Oct. 14	John 15:1–17	Jesus is the true vine	For faith to abide in Jesus
Oct. 15	John 15:18–27	The world hates Jesus' disciples	For Christians who are suffering for their faith
Oct. 16	John 16:1–15	The work of the Holy Spirit	That the Holy Spirit will guide you in truth

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Oct. 17	John 16:16–33	The disciples' grief will turn to joy	That God will help you experience joy amid grief
Oct. 18	John 17:1–19	Jesus prays for Himself & His disciples	To be protected by God's power
Oct. 19	John 17:20–26	Jesus prays for all believers	For unity among God's people
Oct. 20	John 18:1–14	Jesus is arrested	That you will be able to trust God's plan
Oct. 21	John 18:15–27	Peter denies Jesus	For boldness to proclaim your love for Jesus
Oct. 22	John 18:28–40	Jesus appears before Pilate	For the salvation of our leaders
Oct. 23	John 19:1–16	Jesus sentenced to be crucified	Give thanks to God for the gift of salvation
Oct. 24	John 19:17–27	Jesus is crucified	For the salvation of those who oppose Jesus
Oct. 25	John 19:28–42	Jesus' death and burial	For those mourning the death of a loved one
Oct. 26	John 20:1–10	Jesus' resurrection	For resurrection power in your life
Oct. 27	John 20:11–18	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene	For those who are forgotten or go unnoticed
Oct. 28	John 20:19–23	Jesus appears to His disciples	For peace to those in conflict
Oct. 29	John 20:24–31	Jesus appears to Thomas	For God to remove your doubts
Oct. 30	John 21:1–14	Jesus appears to His disciples again	For others who doubt God
Oct. 31	John 21:15–25	Jesus talks with Peter	To experience deep fellowship with Jesus