

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JUNE 2023

Dear Mentor,

Recently, a pastor in my community contacted me and asked if I could meet with a man who was nearing his court sentencing date. When I met with the man, I was glad to hear him express an understanding of the harm caused by his decisions as he described how he got to this point in his life. He did not give me excuses or blame others. But a very familiar story emerged as he described the guilt and deep shame he and his family were enduring.

Healthy guilt can help us learn from our mistakes when we cause hurt or harm to others. Through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, guilt can help us reflect on how our behavior caused harm. This conviction gives us the opportunity to work toward restoration and learn how we can do things differently. Guilt helps us recognize our responsibility for the harm we've caused, just as the man I met with expressed. However, guilt can be problematic and unhealthy if we blame or criticize ourselves for things beyond our control. Placing unrealistic expectations on ourselves can cause guilt to spiral out of control within us.

Shame is different from guilt. When we experience shame, we see ourselves as a failure or feel bad about who we are. It is deeply toxic and can lead to addictions, low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal ideation. Feelings of shame can be particularly prevalent among those who are incarcerated. The environment in which they live and their life circumstances can lead them to believe that they are no better than the worst thing they have ever done.

"In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame" (Psalm 25:1-3a).

Often, a person struggling with shame will perceive it as guilt. It is a tactic of the enemy to attack our self-worth (John 10:10). If you see even a hint of shame within what your student is sharing, explain the difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is when you recognize and take responsibility for a wrong. Shame is when you feel you are a mistake or a failure as a human being. Tell your student you would never reject or criticize them as a person, just as God would never do so. When the dark clouds of shame creep in, remind them through your encouragement and words from Scripture that Jesus offers joy, peace, and hope (Romans 15:13).

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

I have struggled with shame at times, and maybe you have as well. I know that God loves me (John 3:16), but sometimes shame can cause me to dwell needlessly on past errors. Shame has no place in our lives, in our students' lives, nor in the life of the man whom I counseled.

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 Q&A

Join us virtually to ask your ministry-related questions! If you think of a question beforehand, please email it to GatheringsQA@cpministries.org, and we will use it as part of the discussion.

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

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Crossroads Apparel

We continue to offer Crossroads-branded apparel online. We have found that wearing a Crossroads shirt can be a great way to spark a conversation about the important work we do! A portion of the proceeds is designated for the ministry.

To purchase a shirt or sweatshirt, visit <https://www.bonfire.com/store/crossroads-prison-ministries>

Writing Tip

We encourage you to consider breaking your letters into paragraphs. If you are writing your letter by hand, consider skipping a line or leaving some white space between paragraphs. This can make letters easier for students to read.

Collective Scripture Reading and Prayer

Each quarter, our students receive a *Just for Students* newsletter that includes a Scripture reading and prayer guide. We invite mentors and Crossroads staff to read and pray along with them. You will find a copy of the June–July guide enclosed.

Scripture Reading and Prayer Guide: The Gospel of Matthew

This June and July, we will be reading and praying through the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. Matthew was most likely written by Jesus' disciple Matthew, and it was probably originally intended for a Jewish audience. Matthew references the Old Testament often in his writing, pointing out how Jesus fulfills God's promises to His people. We hope you are blessed as you read and pray through this wonderful Gospel.

A Note About Jesus' Family Tree: If you have never read Matthew, you might be surprised by how it begins: with the family tree of Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph. It seems like an odd place to start, doesn't it? Why does Matthew, who is about to describe the most exciting and significant event in human history, begin his book with a list of names? Be careful not to read over these names too quickly. Matthew is showing us who Jesus identifies with and is legally related to through Joseph. Notice that the dishonorable people Jesus is related to are not hidden in the background. In fact, outcasts and sinners are featured heavily in the list of names. Even when Matthew gets to David, the great king of Israel to whom the promise of the coming Messiah was made, he reminds us of David's adultery and murder (Matthew 1:6).

Date	Passage	Reading Topic	Prayer Focus
Jun. 1	Matt. 1:1–17	Jesus' family tree	For a family member who does not know Jesus
Jun. 2	Matt. 1:18–25	Joseph obeys the Lord	For a heart that is obedient to the Lord
Jun. 3	Matt. 2	The Magi visit Jesus	For boldness and gentleness to share about Jesus
Jun. 4	Matt. 3	John the Baptist prepares the way	For those working to make Jesus known
Jun. 5	Matt. 4:1–17	Jesus is tempted by Satan	To be strengthened against temptation
Jun. 6	Matt. 4:18–5:12	Jesus begins His ministry	For God to show you how to bless someone else
Jun. 7	Matt. 5:13–30	Jesus is the fulfillment of God's law	For a heart that is quick to forgive
Jun. 8	Matt. 5:31–48	Love your enemies	For those you may consider enemies
Jun. 9	Matt. 6:1–18	Jesus teaches about prayer	That your prayer life may be joyful and powerful
Jun. 10	Matt. 6:19–34	Treasures in heaven	That you will store up treasure in heaven
Jun. 11	Matt. 7:1–20	Ask, seek, knock	For boldness to seek after God
Jun. 12	Matt. 7:21–8:13	The wise and foolish builders	For the wisdom to build your life on Jesus
Jun. 13	Matt. 8:14–27	Jesus calms the storm	For those who need the peace only Jesus brings
Jun. 14	Matt. 8:28–9:8	Jesus forgives and heals	For someone who needs healing
Jun. 15	Matt. 9:9–26	Jesus calls Matthew	For God to be glorified in your life
Jun. 16	Matt. 9:27–38	The harvest is ready	For those who bring the Gospel to the lost
Jun. 17	Matt. 10:1–20	Jesus sends His followers ahead	For the willingness to fearlessly follow Jesus
Jun. 18	Matt. 10:21–42	Jesus instructs His followers	For wisdom and strength to follow Jesus
Jun. 19	Matt. 11:1–19	Jesus and John the Baptist	For more patience
Jun. 20	Matt. 11:20–30	The Father revealed in the Son	For a closer walk with Jesus
Jun. 21	Matt. 12:1–21	Jesus is Lord over all	For rivers of living water to flow in and from you
Jun. 22	Matt. 12:22–37	Jesus confronts His accusers	For more humility
Jun. 23	Matt. 12:38–50	Jesus is greater than Solomon	To trust in God for your daily needs
Jun. 24	Matt. 13:1–23	The parable of the sower	For a heart ready to receive God's Word
Jun. 25	Matt. 13:24–43	The parable of the weeds	For a greater love for the truth
Jun. 26	Matt. 13:44–58	The parable of the net	That many will come to faith in Jesus
Jun. 27	Matt. 14:1–21	Jesus feeds the five thousand	For those who are poor and hungry
Jun. 28	Matt. 14:22–36	Jesus walks on water	That you will not doubt the works of God

Jun. 29	Matt. 15:1–20	We need clean hearts	For those who are struggling with temptation
Jun. 30	Matt. 15:21–39	Jesus feeds the four thousand	That God will supply all your needs
Jul. 1	Matt. 16:1–20	Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah	To grow in your knowledge of the Lord
Jul. 2	Matt. 16:21–17:13	Jesus predicts His coming death	For the strength to take your cross and follow Jesus
Jul. 3	Matt. 17:14–27	The temple tax	For our government and our leaders
Jul. 4	Matt. 18:1–14	Parable of the wandering sheep	For those who are no longer following Jesus
Jul. 5	Matt. 18:15–35	Parable of the unmerciful servant	That you will be merciful like Jesus
Jul. 6	Matt. 19:1–15	Jesus welcomes the little children	For a childlike faith that relies daily on the Lord
Jul. 7	Matt. 19:16–30	The danger of riches	That you will be content with what you have
Jul. 8	Matt. 20:1–16	Parable of the workers	For a heart that is free from jealousy
Jul. 9	Matt. 20:17–34	Jesus again predicts His death	For those struggling in their faith
Jul. 10	Matt. 21:1–17	Jesus enters Jerusalem as King	That the Gospel would be preached globally
Jul. 11	Matt. 21:18–32	Parable of the two sons	For those who feel despised or rejected
Jul. 12	Matt. 21:33–46	Parable of the tenants	For those who are angry or bitter toward God
Jul. 13	Matt. 22:1–22	Parable of the wedding banquet	For more joy in your walk with the Lord
Jul. 14	Matt. 22:23–40	The greatest commandment	For more love for God and your neighbor
Jul. 15	Matt. 22:41–23:12	Warning against hypocrisy	That you will not be double-minded or hypocritical
Jul. 16	Matt. 23:13–39	Jesus condemns the religious leaders	To be clean, inside and out
Jul. 17	Matt. 24:1–14	Jesus teaches about His return	That you will be ready for Jesus to return
Jul. 18	Matt. 24:15–35	Further teaching about Jesus' return	For those being persecuted for their faith in Jesus
Jul. 19	Matt. 24:36–51	No one knows the day or the hour	For more faith in God's plan
Jul. 20	Matt. 25:1–13	Parable of the ten virgins	For less love for the things of the world
Jul. 21	Matt. 25:14–30	Parable of the bags of gold	To be faithful with what God has given you
Jul. 22	Matt. 25:31–46	The sheep and the goats	For the salvation of the lost
Jul. 23	Matt. 26:1–16	The plot to kill Jesus	Thank God for His plan of salvation
Jul. 24	Matt. 26:17–30	The Last Supper	That your faith may be strengthened
Jul. 25	Matt. 26:31–46	Jesus prays in the garden	For faith and wisdom to follow God's will
Jul. 26	Matt. 26:47–68	Jesus is arrested and tried	For those who seem far from God
Jul. 27	Matt. 26:69–27:10	Peter disowns Jesus	For strength against temptation
Jul. 28	Matt. 27:11–26	Jesus before Pilate	For peace where there is conflict
Jul. 29	Matt. 27:27–44	Jesus is crucified	For the ability to share the Gospel
Jul. 30	Matt. 27:45–66	The death of Jesus	For those who feel hopeless or forsaken
Jul. 31	Matt. 28	Jesus rises from the dead!	To know God's power in your life