

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



OCTOBER 2023

Editor's Note: *Two days after Doug finished writing this letter, he had successful heart surgery. He is currently in his second month of recovery. Thank you for all of your prayers and support throughout this season.*

Dear Mentor,

In the March issue of *Just for Mentors*, I shared my personal health journey, writing about my experience with a heart valve replacement. Since then, my doctor once again pulled the stethoscope from my chest and told me, "You have a heart murmur." An echocardiogram appointment was followed by a concerned call from the cardiologist, who read the results to me. As I processed the news, memories of my past heart surgery challenges flooded my mind. The realization hit hard—my eight-year-old replacement valve was failing.

I had been forewarned about the potential for valve failure over time, but this news caught me off guard. Over the following days, I grappled with my thoughts, verbally processing the uncertainties that lay ahead. But I was reminded that the best way to approach this challenge was one day at a time.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

We often plan for the future, filling our calendars with events and commitments while wondering how everything will get done. However, during life's crises, we confront complicated questions about what lies ahead. *Will this ever end? Is there a cure? Will we lose everything?* These are questions that can only be answered in God's time. Praying to God for our daily bread takes on deeper meaning (Matthew 6:11).

Our students are facing their own crises. Some grapple with the acute crisis of accepting their incarceration, while others navigate chronic health challenges, whether mental, physical, or spiritual. Many are looking toward the future with the hope of leaving their prison walls behind them.

No matter how much we worry or try to make plans for what lies ahead, we cannot control what tomorrow will bring. Instead, we're called to release our anxieties to God and focus on His goodness. We find comfort in the knowledge that God remains in control of every situation. As I prepare for imminent heart surgery, I rest in His peace and presence, secure in the understanding that nothing is beyond God's reach.

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you" (Psalm 56:3).

As you approach your letters to students this month, consider sharing a period in your life when you realized you needed to take it one day at a time. What were your emotions like? What were your prayers? What did God show you as you embraced this perspective?

The upcoming surgery and recovery journey have forced me to reevaluate my understanding of living one day at a time. This concept doesn't come naturally to me; maybe it's the same for you. Together, let's cling to God's peace and presence as we navigate life's challenges day by day.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

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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 Gathering

Please join us for our quarterly virtual mentor gathering! Our speaker for October, Manny Mill, will focus on answering the question, "Why do we serve men and women in prison?"

Manny is the founder of Koinonia House Ministries, serving as chief executive officer for nearly thirty years (koinoniahouse.org). Join us as Manny emphasizes the importance of the work you do by sharing stories of people who have experienced redemption through Christ.

Tuesday, October 17th, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Students Who Do Not Respond as Expected

It is not uncommon for mentors to encounter frustration when their Tier 2 or 3 students don't open up as much as we would like them to. This is especially true for Tier 2/3 mentors who continually ask their students thoughtful questions only to receive brief responses or no responses at all. We have received inquiries from mentors who question their impact and wonder if reassignment to a different student might be necessary. To encourage you, we want to share a few words from two mentors who shed light on their perspectives when facing such situations:

"It's not about us, it's about them, and we are called to serve them. Each of our students has a choice on how to respond to their lessons and letters received. It's their choice, and we need to graciously accept their choice as we respond to them in love. We can't control what they do, but we can control what we do and how we respond to it." – Rev. Roy

"I must simply be faithful and let the Word do its work. I can't change her, but I can love on her, encourage her, and continue my constant presence in her life. I will definitely continue with her. Since I wrote to you, I received a lesson from my student Itza, and it was well done. She sounded clear-minded and almost humble. I believe in prayer! Even before I received this amazing lesson from her, I had regained my perspective and decided I must not let her go. I may never understand her, but I don't have to. I am a steward of the Word of God by the grace of God. Her answers to me may not be pleasant, but they don't need to be. She seems to keep coming back, maybe for the wrong reasons, but this last letter has me more hopeful for her than ever. Who knows what God will do in her heart? I just want to remain faithful to my commitment to the Lord and Crossroads." – Barbara