

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



FEBRUARY 2024

Dear Mentor,

*"There's no better time to realize that you are not a failure in life. You've just been delayed." – Victor*

*Regardless of what you have done or how long you have been or will be in prison, you're not a failure unless failure is what you accept for yourself. In fact, it's impossible to be a failure if you use your time well.<sup>1</sup>*

This is how author Robin Casarjian opens the first chapter of her book *Houses of Healing*. My wife, Hendrina, and I gave our group in prison the task of reading the initial chapters of this book for our upcoming twelve-week study. As we began discussing the first chapter, it became clear that the concept of failure lingered in everyone's thoughts, and an adjustment needed to be made to our planned discussion.

Feelings of failure, whether perceived or real, are common to all of us. I believe most of us desire to rectify any harm or mistakes we may have made, but reconciling our desires with reality can be challenging. I've had numerous intimate conversations with people nearing the end of their lives who revealed their remorse over past failures. Hindsight often causes us to reflect deeply on our past actions.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).*

Each man in our group shared a difficult story about how they have failed others and their deep uncertainty about finding healing. Some of them expressed the feeling that their failures had become integral to their identity. However, in their words, I also heard humility and the desire to do things differently moving forward.

Our students are paying the cost of failing others, but I believe Victor's message is clear: our failures should not shape our futures. Instead, God calls us to acknowledge our sins, accept His forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and follow the example of Paul, who, despite describing himself as the worst of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), chose to forget the past and move forward toward Jesus (Philippians 3:13–14).

When writing to your students, emphasize the sacrifice made on the cross that allows them to find freedom from past mistakes and regrets. Encourage them to prayerfully engage with the Gospel, seeking answers from God. Spending time in His Word helps us understand who He is, His love for us, the price He paid, and how we should live. Embracing the gift of salvation and freedom transforms our sense of identity, turning past failures into lessons in humility, just as we see in Paul's life.

When thoughts of failure and regret surface, remember that Jesus came to free us from these burdens, allowing us to focus on what lies ahead.

Serving alongside you,



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.

1. Casarjian, Robin. *Houses of Healing: A Prisoner's Guide to Inner Power and Freedom*, 9th ed., 3. Boston, MA: Lionheart Press, 2015.

# 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](mailto:GatheringsQA@cpministries.org), and we will use it as part of the discussion.

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

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

## Spanish-Speaking Mentors Needed

A backlog of completed lessons that need to be sent to Spanish-speaking mentors is beginning to grow in our office. This concerns us because these lessons likely contain important questions about identity and salvation. We do not want to turn new Spanish-speaking students away from our program. But we need your help! If you know someone who speaks Spanish and has a heart for the Lord and people in prison, please direct them to [cmcarcelario.org](http://cmcarcelario.org), where they can find further information about becoming a mentor in our Spanish program.

## Guidelines for Lesson Feedback: Check Marks

As you review lessons, we kindly ask that you refrain from using check marks to track progress. Check marks might carry negative connotations for students. Instead, please write encouraging comments or prayers next to students' answers.

## Reminders: Texas Mailing Procedure & Transition to Black-and-White Lessons

Over the last few months, we have updated you on some adjustments we have made to our lessons and processes to help us better serve our students amid increasing mail restrictions. These adjustments include:

- **Change in mail procedure for students in Texas state prisons:** For students in state prisons in Texas, you'll now find a pre-addressed envelope to Crossroads in your lesson packet rather than the pre-addressed envelope with the student's address that typically accompanies student lessons. (This does not apply to federal prisons in Texas.)
- **Transition to black-and-white lessons:** We are shifting toward printing black-and-white lessons. As we continue to use up the lessons we have already printed in color, you may receive a mix of full-color and black-and-white lessons.

These changes are proactive steps to comply with facility regulations and ensure that we can continue delivering lessons to our students. We appreciate your flexibility and dedication as we implement these changes.

For more detailed information and the rationale behind these changes, please refer to last month's *Just for Mentors*. You can find past issues here: [cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-mentors](http://cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-mentors).