

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JUNE 2024

Dear Mentor,

I sat onstage beside three other men, ready to participate in a panel discussion. Along with a small audience, we had just watched a film that depicted the lives of eight incarcerated men who were enrolled in a Christian college's prison initiative. Two of my fellow panelists had earned their degrees through this college during their time behind bars, and now, having been released, they were successfully giving back to the community. As I listened to these men speak, my heart was deeply moved. Years earlier, I had known them when I volunteered in prison before they became students of the college.

When I first met them, they were grappling with the grief, losses, and shame of being incarcerated. As one of them spoke, memories flooded back of our discussions about the toll incarceration took on his life. Yet, both men had chosen to forge a new path by abandoning old patterns of thinking and behavior, opting instead to invest their time and energy into understanding what God's will means now and for their unknown futures.

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground" (Psalm 143:10).

It isn't natural for me to wake up in the morning asking for God's guidance on what things I should prioritize in my life that would better the Kingdom. I can be rebellious, self-centered, and self-serving, traits that afflict us all and deeply affect our society.

Paul offers clear guidance on how we are to live within God's will. It's never too late to embrace it, no matter what we have done in the past.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

Our students are at varying stages of understanding God's will in their lives, and not all grasp the concept of sacrificial living. Explaining how Scripture serves as a foundation for this understanding (2 Timothy 3:16) is crucial. There are stories in Scripture that illustrate the discernment of God's will as well as cautionary tales of what happens when it's ignored. Reflect on the power of prayer and encourage your students to ask the Holy Spirit daily to guide them and help them understand (John 14:26). Challenge them to put into practice what they are learning and to trust God as they discern how to interact with others or how they are to invest their time (Proverbs 3:5-6).

In my discussion with those men that evening, I witnessed peace and humility that captivated me as they shared their stories. Life after incarceration hasn't been easy, but they have dedicated themselves to shedding old habits and establishing new ones, essential for their journeys. I'm confident they will continue to reflect God's Kingdom well.

"The will of God will not take us where the grace of God cannot sustain us." – Billy Graham

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Director of Church Engagement

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 18, at 8:00 p.m. (ET)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Lesson Reformatting

Mail policy changes in many correctional institutions across the country now require materials that can be electronically scanned or photocopied. To address this, we are reformatting all our Bible study lessons so we can resume sending lessons to students at the 127 facilities who cannot receive our current booklet format. The content remains the same, but the lessons will now be on 8.5-by-11-inch sheets instead of booklets. Mentors should expect to start seeing these redesigned lessons in their mailboxes by late summer. We are excited about this change, as it will help us reach more students with the Word of God! See a sample of the reformatted lessons here: cpministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/WAY-01.pdf

Note from Doug: A Shift in My Role

My responsibilities at Crossroads have recently shifted, but don't worry—the day-to-day operations of the mentor support team are in very capable hands. While it has always been part of my role, I've been tasked with placing additional focus on strengthening and expanding our partnerships with churches across the country.

Reflecting on my time here, I've noticed that my role has continually evolved in alignment with the opportunities provided by God. Rest assured, the mentor support team will continue to serve you with excellence. I'll still be involved in activities like writing for *Just for Mentors* and participating in both virtual and in-person mentor community gatherings.

Crossroads doesn't desire one-sided relationships with churches. Instead, we aspire to be a prison ministry that churches can truly call their own. We envision partnerships that mobilize faith communities to answer God's call to remember people who are incarcerated, share the good news, and make disciples.

I believe that the heart of this ministry and yours as a mentor are aligned as we look toward success and growth in our reach behind prison walls. I look forward to my continued work with you!

Scripture Reading and Prayer Guide: The Book of Acts

This June and July, our students are focusing on the book of Acts (also known as the Acts of the Apostles). During the earliest years of Christianity, Christians faced severe persecution in Jerusalem, but God opened many doors for the apostles to bring the good news of the Gospel to the nations. We encourage you to follow

(Continued on next page)

the Scripture reading and prayer guide that we provide to our students in the *Just for Students* newsletter. We hope you are encouraged and strengthened as you see how God shared His love with the world through His apostles despite very challenging circumstances.

You can find the *Just for Students* newsletters, including current and prior Scripture reading and prayer guides, online at cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-students.

Date	Passage	Reading Topic	Prayer Focus
June 1	Acts 1:1–11	Jesus' final words	That God will use you as His witness
June 2	Acts 1:12–26	Matthias replaces Judas	That God will raise up disciples
June 3	Acts 2:1–13	The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost	For the Holy Spirit to fill you
June 4	Acts 2:14–47	Peter's first sermon	For the willingness to repent of your sins
June 5	Acts 3:1–16	God heals through the apostles	That God will heal those who are sick
June 6	Acts 3:17–26	Return to God for forgiveness	Thank God for sending His Son
June 7	Acts 4:1–12	Peter and John arrested	For strength to endure persecution
June 8	Acts 4:13–22	Peter and John testify boldly	For boldness to share the Gospel
June 9	Acts 4:23–37	The first Christians are strengthened	That God will strengthen His children everywhere
June 10	Acts 5:1–16	Ananias and Sapphira	For a heart of honesty
June 11	Acts 5:17–42	The apostles arrested	For the courage to obey God
June 12	Acts 6:1–7	The Church grows	For the growth of the Church in your community
June 13	Acts 6:8–15	Stephen arrested	For persecuted Christians everywhere
June 14	Acts 7:1–19	Stephen testifies about the patriarchs	For your leaders
June 15	Acts 7:20–50	Stephen testifies about Moses	For those who make laws in our country
June 16	Acts 7:51–60	Stephen is put to death	For those facing death for their faith in Jesus
June 17	Acts 8:1–25	Simon tries to buy the Holy Spirit	For a heart that is right before God
June 18	Acts 8:26–40	Philip and the Ethiopian	For increased faith in Jesus Christ
June 19	Acts 9:1–19	Saul's conversion	That enemies of God will come to faith
June 20	Acts 9:20–31	Believers question Saul's conversion	For discernment to see as God sees
June 21	Acts 9:32–43	Tabitha is raised from the dead	That God will perform miracles
June 22	Acts 10:1–26	Cornelius and Peter have visions	For God to supernaturally reveal His will to you
June 23	Acts 10:27–48	Peter's revelation for the Gentiles	That the Gospel will be spread around the world
June 24	Acts 11:1–18	Peter shares hope for the Gentiles	That God's love for others will fill your heart
June 25	Acts 11:19–30	The Church continues to grow	For friends and family who don't know Jesus
June 26	Acts 12	Herod attacks the apostles	For people who oppose God
June 27	Acts 13:1–12	Paul and Barnabas travel	To know and follow God's calling on your life
June 28	Acts 13:13–25	Paul preaches in a synagogue	Thank God for preachers of the Gospel
June 29	Acts 13:26–52	Salvation through Jesus	Thank God for the gift of salvation
June 30	Acts 14:1–20	Paul left for dead	For protection for missionaries around the world
July 1	Acts 14:21–28	Appointing church elders	For your elders in the faith
July 2	Acts 15:1–21	The council at Jerusalem	For freedom from legalistic religion
July 3	Acts 15:22–41	Letter to Gentile believers	For new believers to grow in their faith
July 4	Acts 16:1–15	Paul's vision about Macedonia	For spiritual vision in your life
July 5	Acts 16:16–40	Paul and Silas in prison	For strength to endure what imprisons you
July 6	Acts 17:1–15	Trouble in Thessalonica	For the troubles of this present life
July 7	Acts 17:16–34	Paul's speech in Athens	That God will use you to share the Gospel
July 8	Acts 18:1–17	Paul in Corinth	That God will order the steps of your life
July 9	Acts 18:18–28	Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos	That God will bring Christian friends into your life

(Continued on next page)

July 10	Acts 19:1–22	Paul in Ephesus	For God's spirit to fill the earth
July 11	Acts 19:23–41	The riot in Ephesus	For peace in the place where you live
July 12	Acts 20:1–12	Eutychus raised from the dead	For eyes to see God's miraculous work
July 13	Acts 20:13–38	Paul's farewell	For those from whom you are separated
July 14	Acts 21:1–26	To Jerusalem	For the Christian Church everywhere
July 15	Acts 21:27–40	Paul arrested again	For integrity in the justice system
July 16	Acts 22:1–21	Paul's testimony	For opportunities to share your testimony
July 17	Acts 22:22–30	Paul beaten and interrogated	For the courage to speak the truth
July 18	Acts 23:1–11	Paul testifies to leaders	For leaders in government
July 19	Acts 23:12–35	A plot to kill Paul	For protection from the plans of the devil
July 20	Acts 24	Trial before Felix	For wisdom in the battles you face
July 21	Acts 25	Trial before Festus and Agrippa	That judges will judge fairly
July 22	Acts 26	Paul gives his testimony again	For an opportunity to share Jesus with a friend
July 23	Acts 27:1–12	Paul sails to Rome	For your family and community
July 24	Acts 27:13–44	The storm	For safety in the storms of life
July 25	Acts 28:1–10	Paul on Malta	That God will help you use your time wisely
July 26	Acts 28:11–31	Paul in Rome	For Crossroads Prison Ministries