

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



AUGUST 2024

Dear Mentor,

Seated at a reentry ministry's breakfast event, I glanced around at the faces of those in attendance, my mind racing with memories. I saw friends, chaplains, and mentors who had been involved since the beginning of the reentry ministry twenty years ago. As I listened to the speakers, it became clear that many of the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated people remain unchanged. The personal and systemic societal obstacles we addressed years ago stubbornly persist. I leaned over and asked a friend, "Have we made a difference?"

Many of you have asked me the same question. It is an understandable question to ponder as we endeavor to live out our faith in a broken world. One might easily conclude that our world's challenges are insurmountable. I've been in conversations where people ask, "Why bother trying? I am just going to live my life."

Our students may ask themselves these same questions as they strive to live out Jesus' calling on their lives. For example, a student's cellmate may not want to hear about Jesus despite unmistakable changes to the student's way of living. Some may face severe brokenness in their families despite their best efforts to bring healing and restoration.

I recently presented Crossroads at a church and had the chance to meet the congregants. A man humbly shared that he was on parole and described how meaningful it was for Crossroads mentors to visit him through their letters for many years. He didn't have many other visitors during his incarceration, but the mentors faithfully disciplined and encouraged him. He had a hopeful spirit, equipped to disciple others and share the same mercy, grace, and acceptance he received from his mentors.

God has called us to bring reconciliation into the world just as we have experienced reconciliation with Him (2 Corinthians 5:17–20). How do we do this? Should the first question we ask be about *making* a difference, or should it be about *being* a difference? Recognizing the power of the Holy Spirit working through us can help us shift our perspective (Acts 2:1–12). We cannot fix things on our own, but we can be the hands and feet of Jesus, confident in His power that works through us (Matthew 25:34–40). We can *be* a difference by pouring out love into the brokenness of this world and trusting God to do the rest (Mark 12:28–31). "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

At the reentry event, my question faded as I thought about the stories of many in that room. I saw people who had been released from prison years earlier, uncertain about their futures, now on the other side of their obstacles and enjoying successful lives. I also saw people from the church that had supported them after their release, initially unsure of how to help but willing to walk alongside them all the way. They didn't know if they would make a difference, but they started by *being a difference*.

As you prepare to write to your students this month, consider asking what it means to them to *be a difference* to those around them.

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

This month's Q&A session will focus on our Tier 2 & 3 programs. We understand it can sometimes feel like you're doing something wrong or that the program is not working if you don't receive the expected communication from your student. We will address these concerns and other one-on-one mentoring questions during the Q&A. If you have questions about our Tier 2 & 3 programs that you would like to discuss during this session, please email them to **GatheringsQA@cpministries.org**. For questions specific to your student, please email **mentor@cpministries.org** or call (800) 668-2450, and we will respond as quickly as possible.

Tuesday, August 20, at 3:00 p.m. (ET)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Just for Mentors Update

As more mentors are engaging with us digitally, we have decided to transition to an email-only distribution for the *Just for Mentors* newsletters. If we have your email on file, this will be the last physical copy you receive. This change will save on printing and mailing costs for the ministry while still providing you with the monthly mentoring tips and information you need. If we don't have your email on file, we will continue sending you the physical newsletters. If you don't receive a physical or email version of the *Just for Mentors* in September, please let us know so we can ensure we have a valid email on file.

Continued Need for Spanish-Speaking Mentors

Thank you to everyone who has helped connect us with more prospective mentors for our Spanish language program. We still have more students waiting for their lessons to be reviewed by Spanish-speaking mentors. Please continue sharing this need in your networks and keeping this aspect of the ministry in your prayers.

Request for Stationery

We have identified a need for extra stationery for mentors who receive lessons from students in Texas state prisons. Due to specific requirements, it's easiest if we print and supply the stationery for you. If you need additional stationery, please email **mentor@cpministries.org**, and we will gladly send you a packet. If you type your letters, you can load this stationery into your printer like regular paper.

Did You Know?

Many of our students feel inspired to give back to Crossroads—182 current students have financially supported Crossroads either through their commissary accounts or by sending us postage stamps!