



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

[INSIDE]

LETTERS OF THANKS

Students respond to mentor support
with notes of gratitude

STUDENT CREATES CROSSROADS STUDY GROUP **PAGE 6**
FORMER STUDENT RECRUITS CHURCHES **PAGE 7**

Students Find Hope and Belonging

At a Crossroads event a few months ago, a longtime volunteer described Crossroads as a “kitchen-table ministry.” The ministry of Crossroads is delivered every week by nearly three thousand mentors who sit down at a table or desk to provide feedback on a student’s lesson and write an encouraging letter. In this quiet space, they pour hope and encouragement into men and women behind bars. They share stories of their own struggles, doubts, and questions to build connections with students. Their stories show students that everyone struggles. They also show students that all of us can find a way through hard times if we open our hearts to God’s help.

By building connections in Christ-centered relationships, we break down barriers one heart at a time, one lesson at a time. We break down barriers of cynicism to show people behind bars that goodness and righteousness will prevail. Those of us on the outside break down barriers in our own hearts when we see a little of ourselves in our brothers and sisters behind bars.

In this issue, we share a tiny sample of the notes that students have sent to the Crossroads office. When we share their words and handwriting, we break down barriers and get you closer to the ministry, as if the messages were written to you. We hope their messages make it irresistible to answer the biblical call to remember those behind bars.

Honestly, more than anything specific about the lessons themselves, I am so happy to see an organization that is so dedicated to reaching out in such an extensive and personal way with these courses, the mentor interaction, the amount of courses there are, the postage already paid return envelopes, the helpful change of address form, the sign up forms that are sent that I can give to others, and more. You are being the hands and feet of Christ and meeting needs for inmates in such a way that it blesses everybody. Thank you for not just praying and well wishing, but being a doer of God's words.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Matthew 25:40

Thank you for
not judging me
and taking your
time to get through
my work and
help me. It is
more important
and helpful and
meaningful than
you know. This
truly does keep
me going and
help me be a
better person.
Thank you!
God Bless You

Crossroads, it's been a long
three years, but I now am
down to less than six
months, I just want to
say GOD bless you for
all your help in my walk
with Jesus, it's in His name
that I pray blessings from
GOD upon you.

Thank You

David

I've been incarcerated for (24 yrs) straight and fortunately for me, I still have a lot of family members and friends who care for me. However, there are (thousands) of prisoners who are suffering nationwide and nobody are hearing their cries for help.

Thanks for your help! Please return this completed form to:
Crossroads | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49504-0900

Cross roads gave me hope during my incarceration; I would love to be a mentor when I get released

This course helped me see that there are other people who are going through the same situations like me;

That it is never too late to ask Christ into your life!

I liked looking over all my lessons, when I got to read my mentor comments when I got the answers wrong they were up lifting no matter what. Not one time did my mentors degrade me & my work. All my mentors gave me hope and that's the big reason I kept working hard on all my lessons, it not only got me closer to GOD it helped me realize there's hope in life. Thank you mentors

It touched my heart to know someone took their time to care for me. I don't get mail from anyone. NO family friends. So this means a lot to me. And encourages me to keep moving on.

Thank
is the
me not
me than
open

Hello.

1.23.23

I want to thank you for continuing to allow me to do these courses and following me wherever I move to. I've moved twice in the short time I've been studying with crossroads. I am honored and grateful. Please continue sending me more material. I want to continue to learn more and be a part of this journey. I thank you.

Love Always



I THAN
I ASK
Stimer
I've b
year a
From
don't
given
And th
and C

The lesson about Adam and Eve. I realized that God gives us a chance to come back to him no matter what sin has been done. He loves us so much that He wants us with him no matter the situation.

Because, ~~because~~ I don't have to pay postage which right now I couldn't do.
So, Thank You Crossroads

you crossroads sometimes this
only mail I get so it helps
be so lonely. It helps
w that god is trying to
my eyes "

Thank you mentors
and crossroads god bless
fall
Josh from
Texas

Thank God for you'll at crossroads.
for prayers for Parole and my
star Check to come soon.
I've been locked-up now for 7
and I have not heard
my Family once. They
write me but God have
me a NEW Family; you'll
be Leblanc unit Choir,
church.

AMEN!!!

Note: Praise God for Crossroads
ministry. Also for the loving
caring mentors who share ~~the~~ their
time to send letters of encouragement,
Especially to men like myself who don't
receive much mail, let alone an
encouraging word.

May God Bless everyone who as
scripture says "Not to forget about
those in prison"

God Love and
Bless you All
WJ

I guess the biggest thing was showing me that
I am not useless. I'm exactly what God needs
to build his Kingdom. He uses the most broken and
empty to rise up and spread his word. It's empowering
spiritually and emotionally.

Student Gives Back by Starting Crossroads Study Group

Story by Amy Cain
Illustration by Jose Garza

Melissa's early life was marked by bullying and abuse. Kids at school bullied her relentlessly. She wasn't even safe at church, where the taunting only continued.

Eventually, she reached her breaking point, dropping out of high school and leaving the church she'd attended her whole life. She stopped praying and avoided conversations about God. While she was still a teen, she left home and moved in with her fiancé.

Sadly, her hardships only increased. First, she became gravely ill with a sickness that kept her in an intensive care unit for a month. While she was hospitalized, her fiancé left her. After her release from the hospital, she moved back home to heal. That's when she met the man who would become the father of her son.

"He was thirty-seven when I met him, and I was turning nineteen when I started dating him. My



son's father was the one who introduced me to drugs," she said.

Just four months into their relationship, Melissa discovered she was three months pregnant. She immediately stopped doing drugs and smoking, but her son's father refused to quit.

"I left him when our son was four months old because of him doing drugs," she said. "That's when things went downhill, and they went downhill fast. I lost my job, my mom took my son from me when he was six months old, and I became homeless. My mother knew that I was back on drugs."

Although Melissa loved her son and desperately wanted to care for him, her addiction was too strong, and she knew he would be better off with her mother. Drugs continued to control Melissa's life until she found herself in jail facing a voluntary manslaughter charge after a fight with a roommate turned fatal.

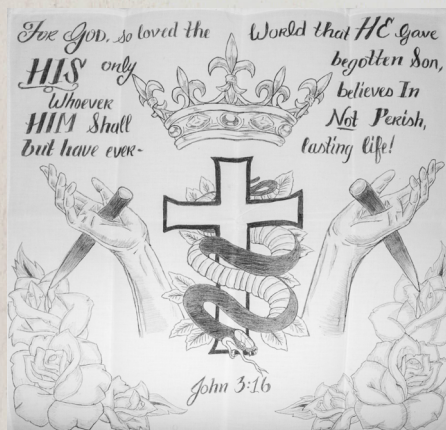
"I was scared out of my mind," she said. "It hit me that I needed to pray and get right with God. I didn't really realize how bad things were in my head and my life. I truly had lost my way completely. I'd hit rock bottom."

In 2022, a woman incarcerated with Melissa introduced her to Crossroads and encouraged her to sign up. Melissa recently finished her first course, *Who Are You?*

"Crossroads means so much to me. It is something for me to look forward to and helps me relate to the Bible in ways I never have before," Melissa said. "[The lessons] asked me questions that I never really sat there and tried relating to and really made me think about things differently. I also love the fact that the mentors write us letters and that I've been able to write to them with other questions, and they have written back explaining and even went into detail. I get so excited every time I get mail. I literally jumped up and down [when I received] my certificate of completion!"

Melissa recommended the Crossroads program to the other women in her unit, and she started a small group to discuss what they are learning.

"God has definitely shown Himself to me while being in jail, and He's turned my mindset around when it comes to giving and helping others," she said. "Thank you, Crossroads, for everything."



Melissa shared this illustration of John 3:16 with us, saying, "I've done some artwork dedicated to Jesus, and I wanted to share it with you. I hope you guys like it!"

A Church Saved His Life. Now He Recruits Churches for Crossroads.

Story by Paige Deur

Nearly two decades ago, Keneth Wahinya Njau sat in a prison cell in Kenya, feeling hopelessly alone. At nineteen, he had destroyed his chance at an education by selling drugs on his college campus, and his family disowned him.

“Behind bars, nobody would come to visit me. Nobody would come and see me,” Keneth said. “Actually, one time, I tried to go and call my father, and my father said he didn’t have a son; he didn’t have a student that had gone to that college. He said they could do with me whatever they wanted because I wasn’t his son no more because he had disowned me completely.”

Keneth struggled to find a connection with any of the people incarcerated alongside him. Then, one day, a nearby church sent people to share the Gospel at his facility. The preacher passionately shared that there was hope for people even if they were behind bars. Seeds of hope and curiosity were planted in Keneth’s heart and mind that day.

“I began wanting to know, wanting to inquire about the things they were saying,” he told us. “I wanted to know about this Jesus and the hope He would give a person who was rejected by society, rejected by his parents, and rejected by his people.”

After Keneth finished his sentence, he found a church with a pastor who took Keneth under his wing and began mentoring him, explaining the answers to his many questions. The pastor was the only one at the church



Keneth Wahinya Njau, Crossroads area coordinator in Mombasa, Kenya, leads a worship service inside a Kenyan women’s prison.

who knew about his past, and he showed great care and concern for Keneth. The pastor’s love and support helped Keneth eventually make the decision to follow Christ.

After Keneth accepted Christ, his pastor continued to mentor him and invited him to return to prison and speak to the people there.

“I wanted to know about this Jesus and the hope He would give a person who was rejected by society, rejected by his parents, and rejected by his people.”

“That is how the passion to reach out to prisons came to be in my life,” he explained. “I’ve been doing this now for more than fifteen years. Going into prisons, preaching to the people, and encouraging them. . . . We know

these are people that are loved by God, people that God cares for, people that God called to become a part of His Kingdom.”

Keneth became involved with Crossroads nine years ago when he was invited to serve as a Crossroads mentor. His involvement grew over the years, and he now serves as an area coordinator in Mombasa.

In his role as area coordinator, Keneth invites churches to live out God’s calling to care for those in prison and equips them to remember people impacted by the criminal justice system, just as Keneth’s pastor did for him.



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

Crossroads connects people in prisons with mentors from churches to develop Christ-centered relationships as they study God's Word together.

PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900
800.668.2450 | cpministries.org



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

“The Crossroads courses have given me hope to continue to have my mind in courses and something outside of prison. It’s opened my mind to different views. . . . It’s helped me in my hard times to be faithful to a family that’s shown care. . . . Even though I don’t know all of your faces, I feel part of the Church family, and for that, I’m thankful.”

Adam P., TX

