

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



FEBRUARY 2025

Dear Mentor,

Single crochet, slip stitch, and chain stitch were terms I learned as I taught myself to crochet using an instructional booklet. Looking into my living room, I cherish the sight of the precious blankets handmade by my grandmother and my wife Hendrina's mother. Inspired, I decided to challenge myself to make a gift blanket. Since it was my first attempt at crocheting, I thought I'd keep it simple—or so I planned—by making squares to slip stitch together.

Oops! While checking my stitches, I noticed a few mistakes—twisted yarn, incorrect stitches, and overly tight tension. If I ignored these errors, the whole blanket would end up crooked. I had no choice but to pull apart my work, unraveling it back to the mistakes, and start again.

This experience reminded me how important it is to examine ourselves regularly. Skipping this practice allows mistakes—or more significantly, sin—to creep into our lives. The Bible reminds us that no one is immune to sin: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Often, it's only when problems arise that I stop to reflect, asking why I reacted inappropriately. Sometimes, I discover that the root cause was a lack of peace in my heart, often tied to an unrelated issue that clouded other areas of my life.

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" (Proverbs 14:30).

As you share this with your students, encourage them to empathize with the discomfort of self-examination. Questions like, "Is my heart in the right place? If not, why?" or "Do I have an unrecognized agenda?" are not easy to ask ourselves. Recognizing our blind spots—like pride or self-preservation—is humbling. King David modeled this well when he prayed:

*"Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).*

Thankfully, we are given opportunities to try again. Our goal is to address our offenses against God and others, so we can respond differently moving forward. Scripture guides us on what to think about (Matthew 22:37), how to react (James 1:19-20), and how to serve others (Matthew 25:40). Living out the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) helps cultivate a peaceful heart as we strive to reflect Christ.

Initially, I felt like I was losing progress each time I unraveled my work to fix mistakes. Yet sometimes, a "do-over" is necessary to fully resolve our errors—or, in life's case, sin. In the end, the time spent paying attention to details resulted in a beautiful blanket I could offer as a gift to someone I cared for.

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.

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NEWS & NOTES

Mentor Q&A - Bring a Friend!

This month, we invite you to bring a friend or family member who might be interested in becoming a mentor to join you during our Q&A session! Brew some coffee, log in, and join us as we answer common questions about mentoring. Our seasoned mentors will also share words of encouragement for prospective mentors considering joining Crossroads. Your personal testimonies about how being a Crossroads mentor has impacted your life are always inspiring, and we'd love for you to share them!

Tuesday, February 18, at 3:00 p.m. (ET)

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

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Full-Page Encouragement Letters

Please remember to write a full-page letter of encouragement for your student with each lesson. Use the provided stationery included with the lesson to ensure compliance and consistency. If you prefer to type your letters, the stationery can run through a printer.

Need unfolded copies of the stationery? Reach out to us, and we'll gladly provide them!

Update on Student Mail

In recent months, more state Departments of Corrections (DOCs) have switched to digital platforms for incoming mail. Crossroads is committed to ensuring students can still complete and receive physical Bible study lessons with letters of encouragement.

For instance, Oklahoma's state-level facilities now use a digital mail provider. After discussions, we developed a process to ensure our students in Oklahoma still receive their lessons in original hard copies. Under this agreement, lessons will be sent directly from our office to comply with state protocols.

In some cases, you may notice lessons with pre-addressed envelopes that return to our office instead of going directly to students. **These envelopes are pre-filled with accurate addresses pulled from the student record, so you can trust they're going to the correct destination.**

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at mentor@cpministries.org.

Thank you for your dedication to Crossroads and to supporting our students!