

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



AUGUST 2025

Dear Mentor,

Sometimes, you need to show kindness to yourself.

When the weather is warm, I take the dogs to Lake Michigan to swim. In the winter, we hike up the tall, windy sand dunes for a panoramic view of the lake and surrounding area. After a beach day, the dogs always track sand into the car—and I end up with sand in my shoes! Even after a thorough vacuuming, grains of sand cling stubbornly to the carpet and hide in the crevices. I can wash my feet with soap and water yet still find bits of sand between my toes later, ending up on the floor or in my bed.

It reminds me of the consequences of sin—how it clings to every part of our lives.

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

It's not uncommon for incarcerated people to continue apologizing to their families—sometimes years after arriving in prison. It's easy to understand why. Each day, they live with the consequences of their actions. Some try to maintain relationships through a single weekly phone call, even as their children grow up without them. Freedom from guilt can feel out of reach.

I often encourage them to move beyond constant apologies. If someone has acknowledged the harm they caused, apologized, and asked for forgiveness, then taking steps toward repentance is the next act of love. Repentance is the fruit of real heart change.

"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

Still, even when we do our best to make things right, some consequences remain outside our control. Our students must still serve their sentences. We can't force someone to forgive us or to restore a relationship. It's important not to be consumed by what we can't fix. If we are living prayerfully and honestly within God's will, we can be kind to ourselves and not live in a constant state of apology or guilt.

Here are a few comforting truths from Scripture to encourage that perspective:

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:14).

You are made intentionally and uniquely in God's image. Hold on to that truth with confidence!

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Your past does not define you. You are made new in Christ and have the strength to keep going!

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8:26).

In your struggles and weakness, you are not alone. The Holy Spirit is praying for you!

It's a good reminder for all of us: **Be kind to yourself.** And as a result, receive this peace:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

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I still try to keep my car clean, but I've made peace with the sand. I put a blanket down to catch most of it and keep the dogs in the back. I knock sand out of my shoes as best I can. Sand, like sin, clings to everything—but Christ's forgiveness clings even more tightly to our hearts and souls.

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

August Mentor Q&A: Meet your mentor support team!

We thought it would be fun to bring the whole team to this month's call. Each team member will introduce themselves, share what day-to-day operations look like for them, and help you put faces to the names you hear from regularly. This will be a relaxed time of fellowship, and we'll open it up for your questions at the end.

Date: Thursday, August 21, at 3:00 p.m. (ET)

Open your phone's camera to scan the QR code and register online.

We look forward to seeing you there!



REGISTER

Answer Key Reminder

You may remember receiving an email a few months ago about answer keys. This is a reminder that we are transitioning to digital-only answer keys as a cost-saving measure so more funds can go toward student programming.

If you still wish to receive physical answer keys for future courses, please let us know so we can update your preferences. You can reach us at mentor@cpministries.org.

Student Enrollment

Are you part of a local prison or jail ministry? We partner with churches and ministries across the country who distribute Crossroads enrollment forms. Many have found that Crossroads is a great next step following in-person visits.

If you or your group would like to become a referral partner, you can request enrollment forms here:
cpministries.org/resources/for-chaplains-and-ministries