

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



APRIL 2026

Dear Mentor,

In a recent classroom discussion on hospitality versus loneliness, one participant—whom I will call John—shared his story. John has been incarcerated for 36 years. When he first entered prison, he felt he needed to “take his lumps” alone and discouraged his family from visiting or writing, believing he was protecting them from the pain of his sentence. For decades, John has had no visitors and little communication with his now-adult children.

We can empathize with students like John. The trauma of entering prison, facing a long sentence, and confronting the consequences of past choices can be overwhelming. At the time, John believed he was protecting his family; in reality, he was isolating both them and himself.

Scripture reminds us, “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). Even in prison, students still have the opportunity—and responsibility—to care for their loved ones. This care may not be monetary; instead, it may take the form of prayer, encouragement, and continued connection as they live out repentance. As Romans 12:10 instructs, “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Encourage your student to pray daily for their family and to gently consider ways they might offer emotional support, even from a distance. When communication is possible, appropriate, and permitted, sharing their prayers can be a meaningful way to express care and support while honoring necessary boundaries.

We can guide students to approach family relationships with kindness and humility, being careful not to dictate or control the decisions of loved ones. Ephesians 4:2–3 reminds us, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” In doing so, students can grow in love and gentleness, even when circumstances prevent them from seeing the full picture of their family’s lives.

Continue to encourage your students to reflect on past decisions with compassion and understanding, so they may move forward in hope rather than guilt. Trusting in God and seeking His direction will lead students toward restoration and reconciliation (Acts 3:19–21). As Proverbs 3:5–6 reminds us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

John now recognizes that his decision to isolate his family was, in part, selfish. He believed he was protecting them, but in reality, he denied them the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to maintain a relationship with him. While he is uncertain about what steps to take next, this insight marks a meaningful beginning.

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.

(Continued on next page)

NEWS & NOTES

April Mentor Gathering: Spring Speaker Series

This month, Lisa Matthews will join us to share the challenges people face when reentering society, the support they receive through reentry ministry, and how our mentors can support students who are preparing for release.

Lisa currently serves as the CEO of 70x7 Life Recovery, an organization that provides services to men and women returning to society after incarceration. She holds a BS in Organizational Development from Bethel University in Mishawaka, Indiana and has served in various nonprofit and local church leadership roles for more than 20 years. Lisa is passionate about leadership development, strategic planning, team building, and empowering others to use their God-given gifts to their fullest potential.

If you have specific questions about this topic, please send them in advance to GatheringsQA@cpministries.org.

Date: Tuesday, April 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

Time Off Notices

If you will be traveling this summer or need time off, please remember that you can schedule this in your mentor portal or by emailing us at mentor@cpministries.org. Sometimes life gets busy, and you may find yourself falling behind on lessons. Please feel free to contact us to put your account on hold so you can catch up and return to your students as quickly as possible.