

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JUNE 2026

Dear Mentor,

My wife Hendrina and I enjoy working on puzzles together. Not long ago, we finished a 1,000-piece puzzle. After hours of patient sorting and fitting, the picture was nearly complete.

Nearly, because one piece was missing.

We searched everywhere . . . under the table, under the couch, and I even cut open the vacuum bag. No matter how carefully we looked, we couldn't find it. The puzzle formed a happy, fun picture, but it was incomplete. One small piece changed the whole image.

Paul writes in Galatians 5:22–23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” I have caught myself referring to the “fruits” of the Spirit. I shouldn't, but I have.

It's easy to talk about these nine qualities individually and consider them one at a time. But Paul calls it fruit, singular. He is showing that these traits grow together. You can see each one, but they are all connected. Together, they form a whole.

What happens if one area is incomplete or lacking?

If self-control is lacking, selfishness can overtake kindness. If I struggle with love, my expression of goodness will likely suffer as well. If peace is weak, agitation often finds its way into conversation, and joy becomes harder to see. If I am not gentle when exercising faithfulness at the right times, I may be perceived as arrogant.

These qualities are interconnected because they grow from the same source. The Holy Spirit is not developing isolated traits or virtues in us. Together, they form a picture of the Lord Jesus, who lives in us, as born-again believers.

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Think about the “fruit” of your life this week. Has one virtue been incomplete or weak? How has this affected the other parts of the whole? Share a short personal story about this with your student. Then encourage them to reflect on each of these traits and how they can grow toward completeness in their own life.

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:14).

Now, when I look at that puzzle, the missing piece is all I see. Hendrina and I even considered gluing and framing the puzzle just as it is. It serves as a powerful reminder that the Holy Spirit is always at work, shaping the incomplete pieces of our lives.

We are not discouraged—Hendrina was just given a new puzzle to sort and fit together!

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

June Mentor Q&A Gathering

Join Crossroads' Operations Director, Bernice Roshak, for a special Mentor Q&A. She will highlight several office volunteers, share the tasks they do, and describe how volunteering at Crossroads has impacted them.

If you have questions about in-office volunteering or Crossroads' domestic operations, please send them in advance to GatheringsQA@cpministries.org.

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 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

Stories of Transformation

Did you know Crossroads has a blog featuring hundreds of stories that show God's transforming power in the lives of those who are incarcerated and those involved in this ministry?

Visit the blog here: cpministries.org/blog.

Consider sharing these stories with others to encourage their faith and remind them that God is at work—and has not forgotten those behind bars.

Crossroads Curriculum

About this time last year, we were preparing to launch new curriculum. Now that these courses have been in use for about a year, you may have already received one or more of the new lessons.

If you need an answer key for any of the new courses, you can find them here:

cpministries.org/resources/mentors/printable-resources/answer-keys

If you would prefer a printed copy, please contact the Mentor Support Team at mentor@cpministries.org.