

# RETURNING HOME



**CROSSROADS**  
PRISON MINISTRIES

## ANSWER KEY

Cover artwork by Mark, Crossroads student in Australia



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v.0426

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# INTRODUCTION

This course is assigned to Crossroads' students who are getting near their release date from incarceration. The course is focused more on the practical aspects of leaving jail or prison. The student will share about their challenges and concerns about going home. Following Christ will be the most important thing that someone leaving prison should commit to doing. Look for opportunities in this course to encourage the student's spiritual growth and commitment.

## STUDY TOOLS

Throughout this course, students will be provided the tools listed below to assist them in their studies. These tools provide ways that you can interact with students.



**CONVERSATION BOXES:** We have included some spaces throughout the lessons that we call **conversation boxes**. Students can use these boxes to write questions and thoughts they have about the lesson or about life. You can also respond to a student in any space that the student has not filled.



**ACTION STEPS:** At the end of each lesson, we have included a challenge called an **action step**. It asks the student to apply what they have learned. If they feel that they need help or encouragement to complete it, they may simply write down what they plan to do. You can follow up with the student by asking if they have completed it.



**Crossroads provides NIV Bibles, upon request, to students who need them to complete the lessons (if allowed by their facility).**

# Glossary of Terms

Each lesson contains Bible names, terms and ideas that may be new to students. We will do our best to provide definitions that are easy to understand. The list below includes all of the terms found in this course. In each lesson, we have included an asterisk (\*) the first time each term appears.

**Antisocial** – Being against or harmful to society; displaying behavior that is very different from accepted behavior.

**Antisocial Associates** – Friends or acquaintances who are involved in criminal or destructive behavior or who influence a person to hold antisocial (see “**antisocial**”) beliefs.

**Antisocial Behavior** – Actions that harm or violate the rights of other people, such as stealing, lying, manipulation, and violence.

**Antisocial Personality Patterns** – Not caring about or respecting the feelings, rights, and well-being of others.

**Antisocial Thinking and Attitudes** – A view of the world that causes unwillingness to follow societal norms or laws and supports criminal behavior.

**Babylon** – An ancient city whose people destroyed Jerusalem and captured its people. The ruins of the city are located in modern-day southern Iraq.

**Case Manager** – A correctional facility staff member who assigns and tracks programs and, in most cases, approves an incarcerated person’s release plan. They may have a list of resources that can be helpful in planning a person’s return to the community.

**Celebrate Recovery** – A Christian twelve-step program designed to help people recover from a wide variety of unhealthy behavior patterns.

**Coping Mechanism** – Behavior used to avoid stress or unpleasant emotions. This behavior can be positive (prayer, exercise, journaling, etc.) or negative (excessive drinking, abusing drugs, avoidance, self-harm, etc.).

**Cyrus** – Also called Cyrus the Great, he was the king of Persia from 559 to 530 BC. He conquered Babylon (see “**Babylon**”) and freed God’s people from captivity.

**Deceptive** – Having the power to trick someone into thinking something false is true.

**Discern** – To come to know, recognize, or understand.

**Haggai** – One of the twelve minor prophets (see “**minor prophets**”) of the Old Testament. He prophesied to God’s people after their return from captivity.

**Harmony** – Living in agreement with others without lasting conflict.

**Idol** – An image or object representing a deity, or god, to which worship is directed. An idol can be anything we consider more important than God.

**Idolatry** – The worship of idols (see “**idol**”)—anything that is not the true God of the Bible.

**Institutionalization** – Harmful effects that arise from spending a long time in an institution such as prison or jail and becoming used to its environment and culture.

**Marduk** – A Babylonian god worshiped as the territorial god over Babylon (see “**Babylon**”).

**Minor Prophets** – The Old Testament prophets who brought messages from God to His people and the people of the surrounding nations and wrote the twelve shorter prophetic books of the Bible.

**Motivation** – A force that drives or encourages someone to do something.

**Nebuchadnezzar** – Babylon’s (see “**Babylon**”) most powerful king. He ruled from 605 to 562 BC.

**Shalom** – The Hebrew word for “peace.” In the Bible, shalom is used to describe the peace that comes from God and the peace that exists between people. God desires us to live in a state of shalom with Him and with others. The word is also used as a greeting.

**Sobriety** – The quality or state of being sober—not impaired or controlled by the use of alcohol or drugs.

**Statistics** – A branch of mathematics dealing with the collection and study of numerical data, often for the purpose of determining trends or practices of a large number of people by looking at a small sample of representative people.

**Strong’s Concordance** – Another name for *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. A valuable resource for Bible study, it was published in 1890 by theologian and professor James Strong. It contains an alphabetical list of every word present in the King James Version of the Bible, along with definitions and citations of the passages in which each word is found.

**Trigger** – To cause an intense and usually negative emotional reaction in someone (verb); something that causes an intense and usually negative emotional reaction in someone (noun).

# LESSON 1: Preparing to Go Home

Read **Jeremiah 25:1–14**.

1. What accusation did Jeremiah bring against the people of Judah (verse 3)?

**Jeremiah tells the people of Judah that for 23 years he has brought them prophetic warnings from the Lord, but they have not listened to those warnings.**

***“For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened” (Jeremiah 25:3).***

2. What did Jeremiah say the people needed to do so God would not harm them (verse 6)?

***Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not arouse my anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you” (Jeremiah 25:6)***

3. Because the people did not listen to repeated warnings from Jeremiah, what did God tell them He was going to do? List all the consequences in verses 8–11.

**Jeremiah 25:8-11 says:**

***“Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: ‘Because you have not listened to my words, I will . . .***

***\*summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations.***

***\*I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.***

***\*I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp.***

***\*This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”***

4. In your past, what are some of the idols that you put before God?

***Idols are anything that we put before God. The student may answer: Money, drugs, sex, relationships, power, pride, or anything else that they served rather than God.***

5. Think about the idol that was most destructive to you. What was it about that idol that gave you relief from the difficulties of life?

**The student's answer should reflect an awareness of how they have allowed idols, instead of God, to control and direct their life choices. Their answer should include something about how those particular idols brought them temporary relief from their problems but ultimately were destructive.**

6. Some men and women in prison decline parole and choose to "max out" or "jam" their sentence. How is that similar to the actions of the Jewish people who chose to stay where they had been held captive?

**When their seventy years of captivity by the Babylonians had ended, some people chose to stay in Babylon because they were comfortable there and it would have been difficult to return to Jerusalem to rebuild a city in ruins. Some men and women in prison choose not to be paroled, serving their full sentence instead so they won't have to be responsible to obey the requirements of their parole. They are more comfortable in prison than in the community where rebuilding their life will be difficult.**

7. What fears or concerns do you have about getting out of prison and following God?

**The student's answer should reflect an awareness of some of the difficulties and challenges of reentering the community after incarceration.**

8. As you prepare for release, how are you trying to place God first in all your plans?

**Answers can include, but are not limited to:**

**Prayer, Christian fellowship, Bible study, searching for a church, making a commitment to have accountability in the community, making amends to those they have harmed.**

Read **Haggai 1:2–8**.

9. In your own words, what did the people do after they returned to their homeland (verses 2–4)?

**The student's answer should reflect an understanding that the people were more concerned with their own selfish desires and comfort than they were in placing God first in their lives by rebuilding the Temple and honoring God.**

10. As a result of their actions, what were they experiencing (verses 5–6)?

**God was not blessing their efforts.**

***“Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it’” (Haggai 1:5-6).***

11. What did God tell the people to do to correct their course (verse 8)?

**Rebuild His house, the Temple that had been destroyed.**

Read **Matthew 6:25–34**.

12. What did Jesus say we should not worry about (verse 25)?

**The student’s answer should reflect an understanding that God will provide for their needs in the future.**

***“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” (Matthew 6:25)***

13. Write Jesus’ words in verse 33:

***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).***

Here are some important elements to include in your plan to help you put God first. Each one lists an accompanying verse that we recommend memorizing. Look up each verse and write it in the space provided.

14. **Talk to God daily:** Spend time every day in prayer, letting God know your fears, challenges, and needs. Ask Him to strengthen you spiritually and help you overcome your weaknesses.

**Philippians 4:6–7: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

15. **Obey God:** Even though we know the things God wants us to do, we often fail to do them. Is there someone you need to forgive? Have you been resisting God in an area

of your life? Are you holding on to unhealthy or destructive idols?

**James 1:22: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”**

16. **Study God’s Word:** As we read and study the Bible, we learn what God loves and hates. We learn what His will is for us. We learn what God requires of us as we follow Him. Most importantly, we learn that God loves us.

**Psalms 119:105: “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”**

17. **Listen for God’s voice:** Prayer is talking to God, but more importantly, it is listening for God to speak to us. In your prayer and study time, practice being quiet in God’s presence. What is He saying to your heart?

**John 10:27: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”**

18. **Have a grateful heart:** We have a good God who loves us and gives us good things. Being grateful is a choice. We may have trouble in our lives because of bad decisions we have made, but God forgives us and invites us to be in a relationship with Him. If that isn’t a good reason to be grateful, then what is? Make it a habit to thank God for His love and forgiveness.

**Colossians 4:2: “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”**

19. Understand that God is always with you: God says He will never leave us. We will go through difficult times, but knowing and believing that God is with us on even our hardest days will strengthen us and give us the confidence to continue.

**Deuteronomy 31:8: “The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”**

## Action Step

If you haven’t already, start preparing your release plan, emphasizing ways to maintain and strengthen your relationship with God once you are released. Seek out reentry resources that are available at your facility. If you have specific prayer requests related to your preparation for release, share them here so the mentor who reviews this lesson can pray for you.

# My Notes

## LESSON 2: Restoring Shalom

1. What are some things that make it difficult to have shalom with others?

**Shalom is peace, cooperation, and partnership with others, our community, our place of employment. The student's answer should reflect things that hinder having good relationships with individuals and the community.**

2. Make a list of people in your family you need to pray for. Include the family members with whom you have the most conflict. Commit to praying every day for each family member on your prayer list.

**The student should list at least two family members that they have or have had conflict with.**

Read **Luke 19:1–10**.

3. Who was Zacchaeus (verse 2)?

**A wealthy chief tax collector.**

4. What was the crowd's reaction when Jesus told Zacchaeus that He was going to stay at his house (verse 7)?

**They were surprised that Jesus would eat at the house of a sinner. Some may have been upset. Others may have seen it as a sign of hope for themselves as sinners.**

5. What fruit or action demonstrated that Zacchaeus had genuinely repented of his sin (verse 8)?

**Zacchaeus not only believed in Jesus but committed to taking action as part of his repentance.**

***"Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and . . .***

***"if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."***

Start by making a list of things you can do to restore your relationship with one specific family member.

6. Family member: \_\_\_\_\_

What will I do to bring shalom to my relationship with him or her?

**The student should reflect in their list some practical steps that can help restore their broken relationship.**

7. It is easy to be so focused on ourselves and our immediate families that we forget to pray for the communities in which we live. How can you intentionally include this in your prayer life?

**The student's answer should reflect an understanding and awareness of the needs of the community and how to live in harmony with the community inside or outside of prison.**

Read **Matthew 7:12**.

8. In your own words, explain the Golden Rule.

**The student's answer should reflect an understanding of the "golden rule" in Matthew 7:12:**

***"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."***

9. Do you think it is fair or unfair to be expected to make your community safer and better for others? Please explain.

**The student's answer will reflect whether they believe the expectation to make their community safer is fair or unfair. This question provides an opportunity for the mentor to provide some spiritual counsel. If the student believes it is unfair to expect them to make their community safer, their explanation for their reasoning should be well thought out.**

10. If you were part of Zacchaeus's community, and he paid you four times what he had stolen from you, what would your reaction be? How would this affect your feelings about him?

**The student's answer should reflect an understanding that they would be surprised and/or inspired by Zacchaeus's repentance and admission that he had harmed the community. The student will likely indicate that they would have a willingness to forgive Zacchaeus.**

11. Although everyone doesn't need to know all the details of your past, you need some people in your life who are familiar with your journey so they can properly support you. Are you comfortable with allowing people at your future church to get to know the real you? Please explain.

**The student's answer will reveal something about their level of trust in God, the world, or others. Look for an opportunity to provide encouragement for the student to have people in their lives that they can trust to share their struggles with.**

12. What are some ways you can work to build trust with people at your future church?

**The student's answer should reflect some practical things that will help them become a trusted, contributing member of a church when they are released from jail or prison.**

Read **Romans 12:3–7**.

13. List some of your gifts, talents, or qualities that will help you find ways to serve the Church when you return home.

**The student's response should demonstrate self-awareness about the gifts, talents, and qualities that they possess and are valuable to share with others.**

## Action Step

Write a letter to someone with whom you want to restore a relationship. Don't choose your most challenging relationship. Start small—perhaps a friend or coworker you think will respond positively. Keep the goal of restoring shalom in mind as you write your letter. If your facility allows, mail your letter. Pray that God will open the recipient's heart to your words.

## My Notes

## LESSON 3: Getting Out and Staying Out

1. On a scale of 1–10 (1 being not confident at all; 10 being very confident), how confident are you about your ability to stay out of jail or prison after you are released?

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **(Student should have circled a number.)**

2. Please explain why you chose that number:

**There is not a better or best response. As they explain why they have the level of confidence they have about their ability to stay out of jail or prison, look for how to best encourage or guide them to doing things that will increase their confidence and ability to not be rearrested.**

3. What are some possible static risk factors in your life that make you statistically at risk for rearrest? Think about your past, your family, etc.

**Possible responses could be:**

**A parent that had been incarcerated**

**A history of arrest in their life**

**First arrest at a young age**

**Low or lack of education**

**Past or current gang affiliation**

**A past history of drug and alcohol abuse**

**A past history of mental health problems**

4. Read Colossians 3:23 and Proverbs 14:23. What do these verses say about work?

**Colossians 3:23-24: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”**

**Proverbs 14:23: “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”**

5. What are some things that put you at risk for returning to prison that you can change? Make a list of your risk factors and steps you can take to change them.

**The student should identify things they can / will do to reduce their chances of rearrest after release from incarceration. Examples are:**

**Education**

**Drug or alcohol programming**

**Change antisocial thinking and attitudes**

**Receive counseling / mentoring**

**Vocational training**

**Prosocial friends and support system**

**Spiritual growth**

6. Read Proverbs 4:23 and Matthew 15:18–19. What do these verses say about our hearts? **(The student can paraphrase or copy the verse from their Bible translation.)**

**Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”**

**Matthew 15:18–19: “But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”**

7. How would you answer a friend who asked you today, “How goes it with your soul?”

**There is not a right or wrong answer. The student may feel that the condition of their heart is not good. The mentor should use the student’s answer as an opportunity to provide encouragement or direction.**

8. Read 1 Corinthians 15:33, Psalm 1:1–2, and Proverbs 12:26. What do these verses say about the people we spend our time with? **(Some students will copy the verse from their Bible, others may paraphrase. Either response is fine.)**

**1 Corinthians 15:33: “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”**

**Psalm 1:1–2: “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.”**

**Proverbs 12:26: “The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”**

9. List at least three positive things David has done since his release:

**\*Meets with his parole officer twice a month.**

**\*He is working a job he enjoys.**

**\*He has found a church he likes attending.**

**\*The church has a Thursday night drug and alcohol recovery group that David has been attending faithfully.**

10. As David considers whether to go to the concert with the guys, what are some potential red flags? List at least three.

**\*Steve and David have a long history together with some illegal activity**

**\*Mike has sold Steve drugs in the past**

**\*Steve and Mike have some past history of getting in trouble (bar fights)**

**\*Steve doesn't know John at all**

**\*Mike and John met in jail**

11. Knowing that criminal associations increase the risk of rearrest, do you think David put himself at risk of rearrest by going to the concert rather than his recovery group meeting? Circle **Yes** or **No**.

**YES**

12. Explain your response to the previous question. List all the things you think David did right or wrong.

**Wrong:**

**\*David missed his recovery group meeting to go to the concert.**

**\*He was spending time with a group that is smoking marijuana.**

**\*Steve is drinking and driving.**

**\*David doesn't seem sure of his parole requirements for whom he can associate with.**

13. Put a check mark next to each error you have ever told yourself.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am smarter than most people. I won't get caught.  | <input type="checkbox"/> They should be able to forgive me. It's on them.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not interested in what others think.            | <input type="checkbox"/> I need to be in control. I make the decisions.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting my way is important.                        | <input type="checkbox"/> When I want something, I should get it.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My illegal behavior isn't hurting anyone else.      | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm different. People don't understand me.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The laws are unfair, so I don't have to follow them | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to work every day is boring.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others are to blame for my situation in life.       | <input type="checkbox"/> I need to look out for number one, myself.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Karma happens! They deserved it.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> They'll get over it. I don't feel guilty at all.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing good ever happens to me.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> When they yell, I'll just yell louder.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If I didn't sell them drugs, someone else would.    | <input type="checkbox"/> It's not my fault. They should have been smarter.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't help it. I grew up in a dysfunctional home. | <input type="checkbox"/> They have insurance. They'll get their money back. |

**There are not right or wrong answers to this checklist. The mentor should use the student responses to offer encouragement and/or insight and advice to the student.**

14. Choose two thinking errors from the list in the previous question. For each error, give an example of a prosocial thought that will lead to a better outcome.

**Depending on the student's response, the mentor should look at the thinking error the student has listed and their prosocial alternative to the thinking error.**

15. Read Romans 12:2. Write the verse in the space below, and then memorize it.

***“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2)***

## Action Step

Ask God to show you what attitudes and beliefs you have that are antisocial or put you at risk of making the same mistakes that brought you to prison. Make a list and pray that God will help you change each item on the list.

### My Notes

## LESSON 4: Planning to Succeed

**Note:** In Lesson 4 of *Returning Home*, pages 5-6 include a checklist for students to use as they prepare for release. The instructions on that page direct students to keep pages 5-6 and not return them. As a result, these pages may be missing from the student's lesson.

1. What assistance is available at your facility to help you develop your release plan? Take your time asking about and looking into all possible resources. In the space below, list all the programs, staff members, and resources available to you.

**Every jail or prison facility will have different resources available. The student should have done some work to identify possible resources. If the student doesn't list any, encourage them to do more inquiry.**

2. As you start planning for your release, how are you committing your plans to the Lord?

**The student may answer with a simple yes or no. Encourage them to continue praying or to develop a consistent prayer life and to continue strengthening their commitment to following God.**

3. What do you need prayer for as you prepare to go home?

**The mentor should pray for the student based on their stated prayer needs. Let the student know that you are praying for them.**

4. Make a list of people inside and outside your facility who could be part of your support team before and after your release. Think about people you trust and who have wisdom and spiritual knowledge.

**Provide feedback to the student based on their list of support people they have identified. Make some additional suggestions about how to build a support network of people that will help them in their release.**

5. What are some things God has placed on your heart to do for a successful reentry? Make a list below, share it with your support network, and pray about it frequently.

**The student's answer will provide the mentor with an opportunity to provide feedback and encouragement.**

6. As you think about your past and your weaknesses, what housing situations or conditions might be risky for you?

**The student's answer should reflect an awareness of their weaknesses and need for safe and healthy housing.**

7. What are some "little rules" in your facility that you don't always follow?

**Breaking small rules is an indication that we are susceptible to ignoring larger or more important rules. Provide the student feedback and guidance based on their answer.**

8. What excuses do you make when choosing not to follow the rules in your facility?

**The student's answer should reflect self-awareness about how they rationalize breaking rules or not following good guidelines and advice. Provide feedback.**

9. Even if you only have one or two choices, list your possible housing options and note the pros and cons of each option. Consider your spiritual health in addition to your physical needs.

**The student may or may not be able to identify four housing options. Even if they provide only one option, give the student feedback on their assessment of the pros and cons of that option.**

10. What concerns do your family members have about your return home?

**It is important that the student know that his or her family will have some concerns about their release from incarceration. Provide feedback to the student based on their response. If the student writes that their family has no concerns, encourage the student to think about the question more thoroughly and reach out to their family if possible.**

Read **Matthew 6:25–34**.

11. What did Jesus say worrying will not help us do (verse 27)?

**Add a single hour to your life.**

12. What did Jesus say we should do instead of worrying about our needs being met (verse 33)?

***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).***

## **Action Step**

Start putting together your work resume and looking for any job applications you can fill out. If none are available, see if a family member or friend can send you some generic job applications that you can start filling out and sending to potential employers.

### **My Notes**

## LESSON 5: Winning the Race

1. List any addictive behaviors that have had a damaging impact on your life.

**Everyone has some type of addictive or life-controlling behavior that has negatively impacted their life. It doesn't have to just be drugs or alcohol. It may be something like pride, power, sex, gambling, or worry. Provide feedback to the student based on their response if possible.**

2. Have you participated in a twelve-step program like AA or NA? If so, what was your experience? If not, what was your reason not to participate?

**A twelve-step program may not be for everyone. Many people have benefitted from a twelve step or support-group program. Provide any feedback that is appropriate. The feedback may be as simple as encouraging the student to continue or seek out a support group, preferably faith based.**

Read **1 Corinthians 10:12–14**.

3. What does it mean that God is faithful and won't let you be tempted beyond what you can bear?

**The student's response should indicate a belief that God is intimately involved in their life and concerned about the temptations they face.**

4. What are some of the emotions or problems that your past addictive behavior helped you deal with?

**Most addictive behavior develops as a coping strategy to alleviate stress or trauma in our life. Addiction then takes on a life of its own and takes control of our life. The student's response to this question should demonstrate an awareness of how they have used past harmful behavior as a way to cope with life.**

5. What sights, smells, sounds, or circumstances have triggered you to get high or drunk or engage in another addictive behavior?

**Behavior is triggered by a thought that comes to us from an external trigger like a smell, sound, or circumstance we find ourselves in. The student should be able to list some potential triggers to be aware of or avoid.**

6. Read the following verses about sin. After reading all the verses, choose one to write in the space below, and then memorize it. Copy the verse onto a piece of paper and place it somewhere you will see it often.

**Proverbs 28:13**

**Galatians 5:1**

**Ephesians 1:7**

**1 John 1:9**

**The student may or may not indicate what verse they have chosen to memorize.**

7. Do you see addiction as a disease, a sin, or both? Please explain your answer:

**From a Christian perspective, harmful and addictive behavior is sin. Many treatment programs view addiction as a disease. It can be both. This question challenges the student to examine their own view. Provide encouragement to the student based on their explanation.**

8. What are some lies you told yourself when you were unable to control your addictions (whether substance abuse or other life-controlling habits)?

**Lying is an important part of rationalizing addictive behavior. The student's response should demonstrate self-awareness of their own history of lying to themselves or others to avoid dealing with an addictive behavior. Provide feedback.**

9. What are some boundaries you can set in your life to help you stay away from addictive behaviors?

**The student's response should include practical strategies they have identified to help them deal with addictive behavior. Provide feedback based on the student's answer.**

10. List four things you will use as motivation to overcome temptations when you return home.

**Provide feedback to the student based on the above list of motivators to avoiding succumbing to temptation.**

## Action Step

Choose the action step that best applies to you:

1. If you have struggled with addiction to drugs or alcohol, reach out to a case manager or treatment staff member at your facility to ask about sobriety resources to include in your release plan.
2. If your addictive behaviors are unrelated to substance abuse, meet with a friend at your facility who is supportive of your faith journey and your plans to resist temptations. Ask them to spend time with you in prayer. Pray that God will guide your decisions as you prepare for your release.

## My Notes

## LESSON 6: Starting Your New Life

1. On a scale of 1–10, how prepared do you feel to stay out of prison after you are released?

**There is no better or best answer. Use the student's response as you seek to encourage and guide them.**

2. List three of your strengths you think will help you succeed when you return home.

**Provide the student some feedback on their three listed strengths if appropriate.**

3. List three of your weaknesses that could potentially put your successful reentry at risk.

**Provide the student some feedback on their three listed weaknesses if appropriate.**

Read Jesus' words in **John 3:20–21**.

**Living by the truth means living in a way that is consistent with what Jesus says about Himself and about you. It means thinking, speaking, and acting in ways that are honest and pleasing to God.**

4. In what ways do you strive to live by the truth?

**Use the student's response to encourage them as they seek to live by God's truth.**

5. List five small things you can practice doing each day before getting out of prison that can help establish new, positive habits.

**Student responses may include: Prayer, seeking like-minded Christians to encourage each other, restoring broken relationships, education, making a solid release plan, exploring employment opportunities in the community you will be living in, being truthful with yourself and others. (This is not an exhaustive list.)**

6. Who is going to pick you up when you are released? How will this person help you in your first hours outside prison?

**The student response should reflect an understanding and commitment to have**

**positive, spiritually healthy people in their lives to assist their transition to the community.**

7. Write your checklist here: (Student responses should include some of the following.)

- **Meet with your parole officer**
- **Shop for essential items**
- **Pay fines**
- **Meet with a predesignated sobriety sponsor**
- **Attend an AA or NA meeting**
- **Meet with your pastor**
- **Enjoy your first meal outside prison**
- **Meet with your children**
- **Check in with the halfway house, program, or release facility where you will be staying**
- **Get a cell phone (if allowed)**
- **Go to a job interview**
- **Get a prescription filled**

8. What instructions have you received from your facility case manager or reentry coordinator about meeting with a parole officer or supervising agent on the outside?

**If the student indicates they have not received instructions about how to work with a parole officer or supervising agent, provide them with some practical advice about being on time, showing a willingness to follow rules and guidelines.**

9. What wise suggestions about parole have you received from others? Write the best tips here:

**The student should provide advice that others who have been released before have given them to be successful in reentry. If the student does not provide an answer, give them some suggestions for ensuring future success.**

10. What are your greatest concerns about readjusting to life outside prison?

**Student responses may reflect the amount of time they have served in prison. For someone who has been incarcerated for more than three years, there will be some concerns about how the world outside of prison has changed. Use the student's response to provide spiritual guidance.**

11. As you prepare to go home, what specific priorities would you like the mentor who reviews this lesson to pray for?

**Acknowledge the student's prayer requests and make a commitment to them that you will be praying for their requests and a successful reentry.**

## Action Step

Arrange a visit or phone call with a pastor or mentor who will keep you accountable when you return home. Spend time praying with them and reviewing your reentry plan.

### My Notes



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