

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JULY 2026

Dear Mentor,

Years ago, I stood in the gym of a men's prison to open our church's Christmas service. The gymnasium was filled to capacity with incarcerated men, volunteers, and staff. I shared that, if I could, I would start each day walking laps around the prison yard with them. I've repeated that same statement to groups of men many times over the years.

It may seem like a strange statement to most, but I mean it sincerely. It's an expression of honor. I am saying, "I would love to start my day with you and share life with you."

*"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done"*  
(Proverbs 19:17).

In Luke 14:1–23, Jesus reshapes what we often think of as honor. He tells the host not to invite friends, family, or wealthy neighbors who can repay the favor. Instead, we are to invite the poor, the lame, and those who cannot repay us. Yes, we will be blessed by a greater reward that comes from God (v. 14).

Jesus' focus on the marginalized sets the standard for how we are to treat others. Our students cannot repay us for our time, the cost of postage, or the work of this ministry. We do not expect them to; however, many of you have shared how meaningful these relationships have become through simple lessons and letters.

This month, consider how you can intentionally honor your student. Some letters or lessons you receive may give you little to respond to, yet those moments can still be meaningful. You can choose words that communicate respect, patience, and care. Even a simple acknowledgment of their effort can speak to their value. In a forgotten place where words are few, yours can remind them they are not forgotten.

*"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me"* (Isaiah 49:16).

Recently, after a conversation with an incarcerated man's mother, I wrote him a letter. I hoped it would be encouraging, but I did not expect him to write me back. He did not know me, and I did not know if he even had money for a postage stamp. But now, lying on my desk, is a handwritten letter in pencil, filled with words that brightened my day more than I expected.

In many ways, we were able to take laps around the prison yard together—only this time, it came in the form of a letter.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery

Director of Church Engagement

**Have a question?** You can contact the mentor support team at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) or 800-668-2450.

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# NEWS & NOTES

## July Mentor Community Gathering

This month, Reginald Watts will share his journey of addiction that led to incarceration and a life sentence at Angola State Penitentiary. He will also share his testimony of finding faith, overcoming addiction, and ultimately receiving a miraculous pardon.

Today, Reginald serves as the Program Director at Mississippi State Penitentiary, where he is deeply committed to making a positive difference in the lives of those who are incarcerated. He earned both his associate's and bachelor's degrees in Christian ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Reginald is passionate about supporting men as they reenter society after release, and in 2021, he founded RD3000 Watts Ministry to provide both physical and spiritual support.

Please send any questions in advance to [GatheringsQA@cpministries.org](mailto: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!

To prepare for this gathering, please take some time to watch the following videos that show the transformation that is happening within the Mississippi State Penitentiary:

<https://humanflourishing.web.baylor.edu/study-findings/faith-and-flourishing-parchman-prison>

<https://www.pepperdine.edu/center-for-faith-common-good/research/flourishing-captives.htm>

## Student Questions and Themes for *Just for Students*

*Just for Students* is a quarterly newsletter that Crossroads sends to all students in the mentorship program. It provides spiritual encouragement, updates and reminders about the program and other useful information for students. We need your help providing students with relevant and practical support throughout these newsletters. Please fill out this form with any common questions, challenges, prayer requests, or themes you see in your students' lessons. We appreciate your help!

<https://crossroads.wufoo.com/forms/wytqtyz0g14gb6/>



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