

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



AUGUST 2026

Dear Mentor,

As we sat across from each other in a prison unit, Eric looked me in the eye and began to describe the path that led him into incarceration. He described a mother and father who did their best to raise him. Even so, he spoke of an “absentee father” and times when his family lived in homeless shelters. Church was something they mostly attended on Easter.

By the age of 20, he had no direction or marketable skills. He became involved in small-time “thievery” until one day, things escalated. He broke into a home, and everything changed.

A man lay dead on the floor. In the struggle, Eric suffered a knife wound across his fingers, cut to the bone. Panicked, he fled in the victim’s car and was later caught after crashing it across state lines.

On his third day in a closet-sized cell, he sat staring at the untreated wound on his hand. For the first time, the reality of what had happened settled in. He told me he believed God could not love him anymore after what he had done, and the tiny cell began to close in around him.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

Around 2:30 in the morning, he was pounding on the door, crying so hard his chest hurt.

Hearing the commotion, an older officer came and unlocked the cell door. He allowed Eric to walk outside into a small yard surrounded by walls. Surrounded by darkness, Eric looked up and saw the blinking stars filling the night sky. As they talked, Eric told him, “God doesn’t love me anymore. I’ve committed the ultimate sin.”

The officer said, “Son, I’m a minister. Do you know Moses? He was a murderer.” He spoke about Paul as well and how God had used both men mightily. As he walked Eric back to his cell, he said, “Tell God what you did and ask Him to forgive you, and mean it with all your heart.”

Eric never forgot the few words spoken to him in that prison yard. Many people carry shame that convinces them they are beyond forgiveness or too far gone for God to love them. Invite your student to bring their failures honestly before God rather than remaining trapped in guilt or hopelessness (Psalm 51:17). Grace does not erase consequences, but it reminds us that our failures are never greater than God’s mercy (Lamentations 3:22–23).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

That night, he did exactly that. He said if joy could be felt like a physical touch, that is what he experienced.

Eric has now been incarcerated for 24 years and serves as a ministry leader inside the prison.

“My life started when I came to prison. Everything I know and learned, I learned here,” he said before adding, “God is sovereign, and salvation belongs to the Lord.”

Then, after a pause, he said, “I want to be free, but it isn’t always on my mind.”

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.

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NEWS & NOTES

August Mentor Q&A Gathering: Open Floor

This month, we are dedicating this time together to answer any questions you have. Have you received a question from a student you don't know how to answer? Are you wondering how to support your student in the situation they find themselves in? Bring your questions, and let's brainstorm together.

To help us prepare and provide the best answers, feel free to email your questions to us in advance to **GatheringsQA@cpministries.org**.

Date: Tuesday, August 18, 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

Acknowledge Prayer Requests from Students

Be sure to mention in your letter or lesson response that you are praying for your student—especially if they have shared a specific prayer request. This is deeply meaningful to them. Scripture includes many examples of prayers for God's people (see the Mentor Handbook for examples you can include in your letters).

Upcoming Crossroads In-Person Mentor Gatherings

- Bozeman, Montana (September 2026)
- Prinsburg, Minnesota (September 2026)

For more information and to register for upcoming events, visit our events page at **cpministries.org/events**.

Spanish Curriculum Launch

We are excited to share that our new Spanish curriculum will be launching soon! Throughout the coming year, we will also be working to recruit and equip more Spanish-speaking mentors to serve students in prison. As part of this effort, we are updating our website and creating new Spanish-language resources to help mentors share about Crossroads, invite others to get involved, and serve their students well.

Please pray for wisdom and guidance as we roll out these new resources, and pray that God would raise up more Spanish-speaking mentors to help reach students with the hope of Christ.