

JUST FOR STUDENTS



SUMMER 2026

Please do not send this newsletter back to Crossroads.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

– 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

Let Your Light Be Seen

"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light" (Luke 11:33).

My mother had several sterling silver platters and serving pieces that we only saw once a year. As she prepared for her annual Sunday School Christmas party, she would ask me—since I was tall enough—to reach into the highest cabinet and bring them down.

Without fail, they were always tarnished, as sterling silver tends to be when it sits unused for long periods. My mother and grandmother would spend hours at the kitchen table, carefully rubbing cleaner into every crack and crevice until the pieces were restored to their original shine. Then she would display them, filled with delicious holiday food, and they were admired by everyone who came.

But as soon as the party ended and the guests left, the platters were put right back into the far corner of the cabinet.

Too often, we do the same thing with our spiritual gifts. Like that silver, we keep them tucked away and only bring them out for special or occasional moments.

Scripture teaches us something very different. First, each of us has been given a gift by God. These gifts are meant to reflect His grace and to serve others. Through the Holy Spirit, we become the hands and feet of God in the world.

Second, unlike my mother's silver, our gifts are not meant to stay hidden. They are meant to be seen—used regularly and shared openly, especially in a world that is hurting.

In fact, it is often in the darkest places that God's gifts shine the brightest.

Each of you has a spiritual gift. One of the best ways to discover it is simply to make yourself available to God. As you do, He will place opportunities in your path that reveal how He has uniquely gifted you. Through prayer and time in His Word, your understanding of that gift will grow stronger and clearer.

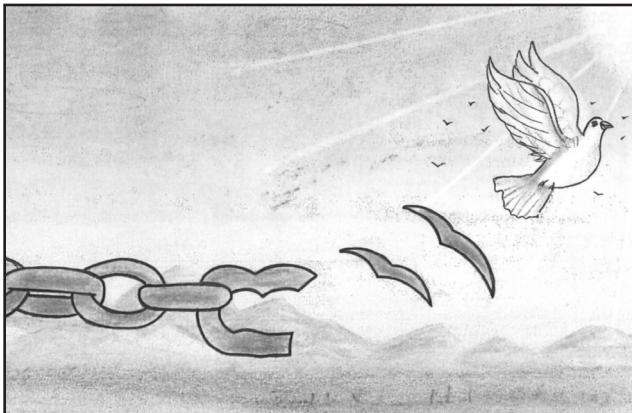
My prayer is that you will experience the deep joy that comes from serving God with the gifts He has given you.

As always, we encourage you to tell your friends about Crossroads and invite them to become students like you. Thank you for your faithfulness, and may God bless you and your families!

—Joe Pryor, Crossroads President & CEO

The Creative Corner

Artwork and poetry shared by Crossroads students, using their God-given gifts to glorify Him.



Untitled, by Jose S.

God Kept Me by Stanely M.

I almost let go,
Felt like I couldn't take life anymore.
My problems had me bound,
Depression weighed me down,
But God held me close—
So I wouldn't let go.
God's mercy kept me;
I almost gave up.
Right at the edge of a breakthrough,
But I couldn't see.
The devil had me,
Yet Jesus came and grabbed me.
He held me close—
So I wouldn't let go.
I'm here today,
Because God kept me.
I'm alive today,
Because of His grace.
I was really down;
The devil had me bound,
But God's mercy kept me.
You don't know
What I've been through,
Or how I went through it.
Depression held me,
So far down
I lost who I was.
That's why I'm glad—
So glad—
That God kept me.



*Jesus, the lighthouse—my guide
in times of tribulation, by Jose M.*

My Chosen by Milan K.

Many are called, but few are chosen
You must keep watch and not be dozing

Christ calls us through the power of truth
His resurrection is living proof
Our Lord sacrificed His precious blood
Sins washed away by this holy flood
Even reaching to hearts that are frozen
"Now," says the Lord, "you are My chosen."

DID YOU KNOW CROSSROADS PUTS STUDENT ART ON ITS CHRISTMAS CARDS?

Do you want your art to be considered? Send your Christmas artwork to the address below before September 1.

SHARE YOUR ARTWORK

Crossroads students are invited to submit artwork and poetry to Crossroads for display and publication. You can submit artwork or poetry by mailing it to the Crossroads office at the address below. Include your name, ID number, address, the title of your work, and an artist's statement (optional). Entries must be original, and no copyrighted images or works will be published.

Crossroads | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900

The Fountain Writers

Notes of encouragement written by members of the Crossroads community to uplift and inspire you on your journey of faith.

Hello friend,

Peace is something we all long for, yet it often feels just out of reach. We try to find it in quiet moments, in plans that go smoothly, or when things fall into place. But lasting peace, that deep-seeded sense that all is truly well, isn't found in a life without noise, chaos, or error.

Before Jesus returned to heaven, he spoke these words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27, NIV)

The peace of God remains steady in the middle of fear, stress, and the unknown. It quiets our hearts not because we understand everything, but because we trust the One who does. God's peace provides us assurance, belonging, and hope.

I pray that you learn to rest in that peace—to allow it to wash over you and fill your heart and soul.

So that even in the busiest and hardest moments, you know His peace.

From "A Fountain of Peace"

A Big Small Turning Point

I am a Yankee fan. In 2004, "we" were beating the Boston Red Sox in the American League Championship Series, 3–0. In Game 4, "we" were ahead 4–3 in the bottom of the 9th inning.

Then one small play changed everything.

Dave Roberts stole second base. Bill Mueller hit a single and tied the score. Boston won in the 12th inning. Then they won Games 5, 6, and 7—and the championship.

One small decision changed the whole series.

A single with a man on first is just a single. But a single with a man on second scores a run. Roberts' choice to steal second made all the difference.

This is how big turning points often begin—with one small decision.

Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus. That one decision became a big turning point in the American civil rights movement.

Our lives do not change all at once. Change often starts with one decision. Can you think of a small choice you made that helped get you where you are today? It may have led to big results.

Sometimes prisoners say, "I wish I had that 15 minutes back." We all feel that way at times. But we cannot go back.

What about the next fifteen minutes?

Right now, are you willing to change the rest of your story? What small decision can you make today that will make a big difference?

About your thinking? I am not a loser. My life is not over. I can help others. I can be forgiven. My mind is not behind bars. I can break that habit. Failing is not the end. I am a person, not a number.

About your behavior? I will take care of my health. I will quit drinking. I will write that letter. I will watch my words. I will try to make peace. I will take the classes. I will listen well. I will seek God. I will find something to be thankful for.

The Bible begins with a God who lets us make choices. History shows that we often make hurtful ones. But the Bible's main message is that God forgives us through Jesus.

He gives us a clean slate so we can make better choices.

Right now.

Brother, a man named Zacchaeus had made many poor choices. Jesus came to his house (Luke 19:1–10). Zacchaeus said, "I'm choosing to live Your way."

Jesus believed him.

He is stopping at your "house" right now. He will believe you too.

Your choice to move toward God. Your choice to be honest. Your choice to pray. Your choice to keep going.

What feels like a small decision today can change your whole story tomorrow.

- Brother Ren, a Crossroads volunteer and devotional author

Verses to Read and Remember

Here are three Bible verses to help you reflect on the unique gifts God has given you and how He is at work through them. Try memorizing one each month. Think about it and pray over it every day as you grow in using your gifts to serve others.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:4–6	"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." (NIV)
2. Romans 12:4–8	"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (NIV)
3. 2 Timothy 1:6–7	"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." (NIV)

From the Operations Department

Here are a few reminders about your lessons and mail:

- **Send back all pages of your lesson.** This helps us process it faster and send your next lesson sooner.
- **Moving or going home?** If you're transferring to a new facility or getting released and want to keep doing lessons, let us know. If you're going home, wait until you get there to send us your new address.
- **Some lessons are sent to a mail service.** For students at certain facilities, we must send lessons to a mail service instead of directly to the facility. In some cases, new lessons will go to your facility while reviewed lessons will go to the mail service. Please know that we understand the value of receiving a physical copy of the lesson in a timely manner. However, at times this process is the only way for you to receive the mentor's letter along with the lesson.

Thank you for your dedication to growing in God's Word. If you enjoy doing Crossroads lessons, please tell a friend in your facility about us.

