



Tanya Glessner has found peace after a violent past.

FROM VIOLENCE TO VICTORY

For Tanya Glessner, home was an ever-changing address filled with drugs and conflict. Her parents fought constantly until they got a divorce when Tanya was 11. It was then that Tanya learned the earthshattering truth – the man she called her father was not her biological father.

“I just remember being devastated. It felt like it just hit me with a ton of bricks,” she tells *Christian Life Testimonies*.

After the divorce, her mother dated men who were prone to violence and drugs. Once, her mother and her boyfriend were arguing when he started shooting his gun in the house. Tanya grabbed her two younger brothers and

hid in the closet. She was only 12 at that time.

When the men turned their violent tendencies against her, Tanya became angry and started emulating the same violent behaviour at school.

“I decided it was better to become the monster than to be the one subjected to it,” she tells *Christianity Today*.

“I started beating girls up at school and being rewarded at home for my victories.”

She was eventually expelled and completed her schooling in a mental health ward. After her release, Tanya was sent away to live with her grandmother where she attended a Christian school.

“I remember just how different the kids were and how different the teachers were. I felt welcomed but uneasy because I hadn’t experienced anything like that before.”

It was at the school where Tanya got to learn about who Jesus is and experience what a Christian community looks like.

“When my mom took me back home that summer, we got along like rabid dogs. We just fought and fought and fought.”

At 16, Tanya dropped out of school and moved out of her home.

“I’m on my own and I’m honestly just a mess.”

Over the next 20 years, Tanya got married and gave birth to two boys. But like her mother, she married a man who was prone to violence and addicted to drugs.

“I became the mirror image of my mother, mastering the art of pushing my husband’s buttons and then playing the victim, always convincing myself I could change him.”

They eventually got divorced and Tanya got custody of her sons.

“I was hurting and I was suffering. I kept myself busy to keep my focus off the unbearable emotional pain I had pushed far below.”

Tanya had opened a salon and spent her weekends hanging out with her friends.

But when she got addicted to meth, her money went into funding her addiction and she lost her business. She turned to selling drugs to make money.

“Within a few months, I was making a few thousand dollars a day and spending it just as quickly,” she recounts.

“My house was a revolving door

of addicts, boyfriends, guns, and drugs. “I remember thinking if God was real, things wouldn’t be where they’re at.”

After a boyfriend broke both her wrists, Tanya made her grandmother the legal caretaker of her children, should anything happen to her.

“I became extremely depressed and suicidal.”

One day, Tanya was at a stranger’s home and injecting herself with

drugs when the needle dropped into the carpet, sticking up straight like a dart. At that moment, Tanya fell on her knees and prayed.

“I was just like ‘God if you’re real, save me because I cannot save myself.’”

A few weeks later, Tanya got into a fight which landed the woman in hospital. She was arrested for the incident and got an eight-year prison sentence.

While in the county jail, Tanya started attending Bible studies and read the Bible regularly.

“Things started to open up and the guilt that started to weigh in on me was unbearable.

“I sat there and I prayed to God and went to these classes and I decided I wanted to be saved.

“So the church ladies sat with me and told me the prayer to say and I gave my heart to Jesus in county jail.”

● Turn to page 2

Love put him on the right path

Living an aimless life filled with good intentions but still heading down the wrong path, Ezekiel Morekhure says he tried so hard to be “one of the good guys” but still lived in drunkenness, drugs and crime.

His bad choices caught up with him in 2022 when he was arrested for possession of stolen property and sentenced to 13 months in prison.

It was in prison that he was finally able to turn things around, thanks to his family, who never gave up on him, the 43-year-old tells *Challenge News*.

His mother and sister visited him in prison, and brought him a Bible.

It came as no surprise to Ezekiel that they would encourage him to turn to God. Being strong Christians, it was how they had always led their lives.

“My family was always assisting the church in spreading the word of God,” he says.

“They preached the word of God to me from when I was 19 but I never listened to the message until I was about 40.

“That’s when I started to think about my life of drunkenness and smoking weed and other drugs.”

After resisting them for so long, Ezekiel finally took their advice. “I started reading the Bible day and night,” he says.

Last year, he asked God

for forgiveness for his sins and committed his life to Jesus Christ. “I became a Christian because I saw that my life was going nowhere. I’m 42 years old and never achieved anything. The life I lived never gave me anything but sorrow and unhappiness.

“Worse than that I did not know where my soul would go after I passed away.”

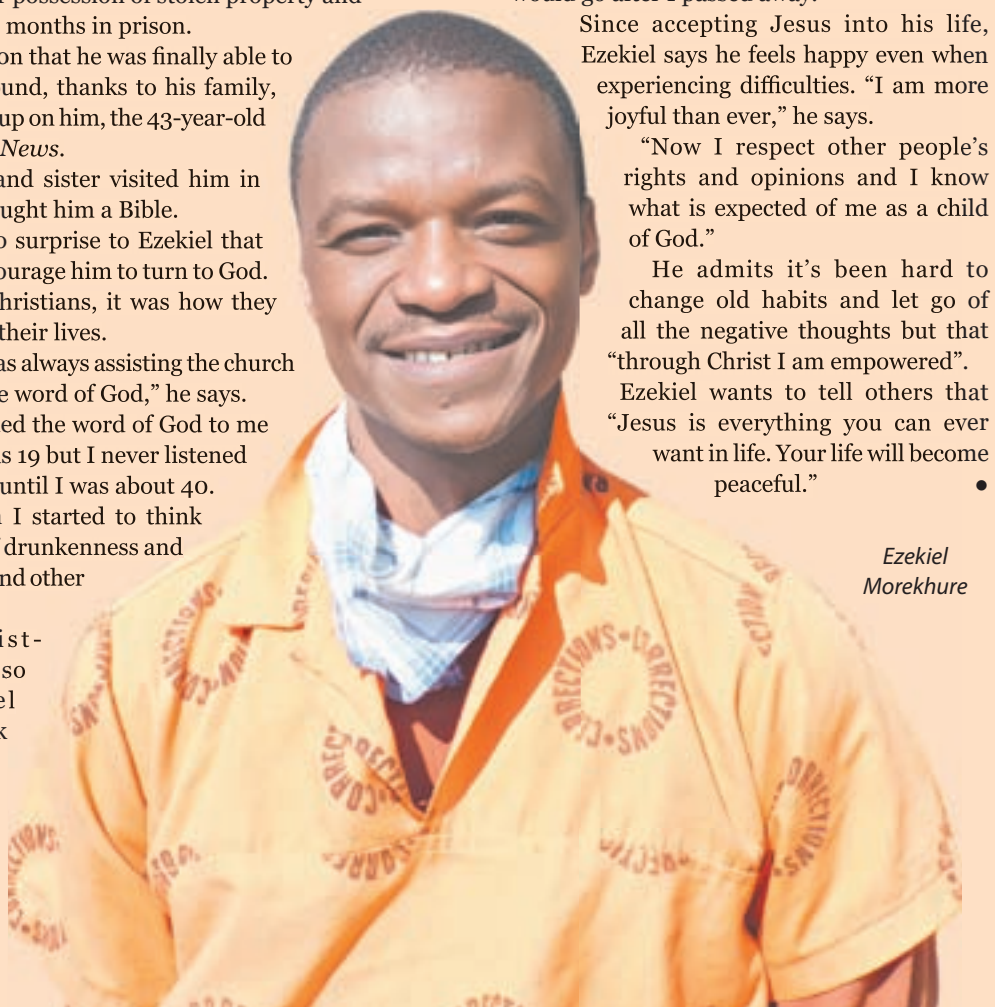
Since accepting Jesus into his life, Ezekiel says he feels happy even when experiencing difficulties. “I am more joyful than ever,” he says.

“Now I respect other people’s rights and opinions and I know what is expected of me as a child of God.”

He admits it’s been hard to change old habits and let go of all the negative thoughts but that “through Christ I am empowered”.

Ezekiel wants to tell others that “Jesus is everything you can ever want in life. Your life will become peaceful.”

Ezekiel Morekhure



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BACK PAGE

INJURY IGNITES FAITH
MATT CARPENTER

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God

QUESTION: SURELY JESUS' DISCIPLES IMAGINED HE CAME ALIVE AFTER BEING CRUCIFIED BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY WERE EXPECTING?



IT SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE, to a sane mind, that Jesus was seen alive after He was executed. So it's no wonder there have been lots of attempts to explain it away. And the suggestion that His followers fooled themselves into believing it is a good example.

Yet, when you look at it closely, the claim that His followers somehow imagined it happened because that is what they were expecting simply doesn't hold water. And I'll explain why.

Imagine your car has just had a very big argument with a brick wall – and lost. Next stop is the junkyard. Everything you know tells you it will never run again and that's the way you treat it. You strip off the plugs, points, wheels and a few other rattly bits that might be worth a bit for scrap or be useful in the future.

However, what if you had a wild hope that the "Fairy Car-mother" would somehow appear, restore the wreck, and deliver it to your door in mint condition three days later?

If you believed that might happen, you would do all you could to cooperate. You would leave everything as unbroken as possible. But as you have no such expectation – you strip it bare and walk away.

This is exactly the attitude the disciples showed to the body of Jesus – but with considerably more respect. When you look at their behavior it is absolutely clear they had no expectation of a grand finale. No hope of Him rising from the

dead. So, they did nothing to make it easy.

Not that they cut lumps off Him or donated His vital organs. But they did, according to the custom of the day, bind Him up so tight and weigh Him down with so much embalming gunk that movement would have been impossible even if He had come alive again.

Wrapped tight round the body – in a way that would have defeated even the greatest of escapologists, were yards and yards of tightly wound fabric. To that was added 75 pounds – that's the weight of two big boxes of fish – of aloe and myrrh, a thick goopy tree resin that congealed it all together.

Far from expecting Jesus to spring up and yell 'boo' three days from then, here was every sign that they had given up the ghost – so to speak.

Yet the events of the days following the death of Jesus led these same embalmers to an absolute conviction that the same Jesus had met with them, talked with them, eaten with them and walked with them. And not just them but up to 500 people over that time.

If ever there was a 'surprise, surprise' this was it. No wishful thinking. Just wonderful but unexpected good news.

Peter Meadows is the co-author with Joseph Steinberg of *The Book of Y* the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life's biggest questions.

The glorious defeat of Chuck Colson

Charles Colson was one of the most powerful men in the USA – until it all came crashing down.

BY ALYSON R. QUINN

At Maxwell Federal Prison Camp in 1974, Charles "Chuck" Colson sat in the day-room focused on writing a letter. A prisoner named Archie suddenly called out, "Colson!"

Everyone went quiet. "Colson!" Archie said again. A tall, strongly built prisoner, he loomed over President Nixon's former "hatchet man."

"What are you going to do for guys like us when you get out?" he demanded.

Chuck promised he would never forget the men at Maxwell.

"Bull!" Archie said, throwing down the deck of cards he had been playing with. "Big shots like you get out and forget little guys like us."

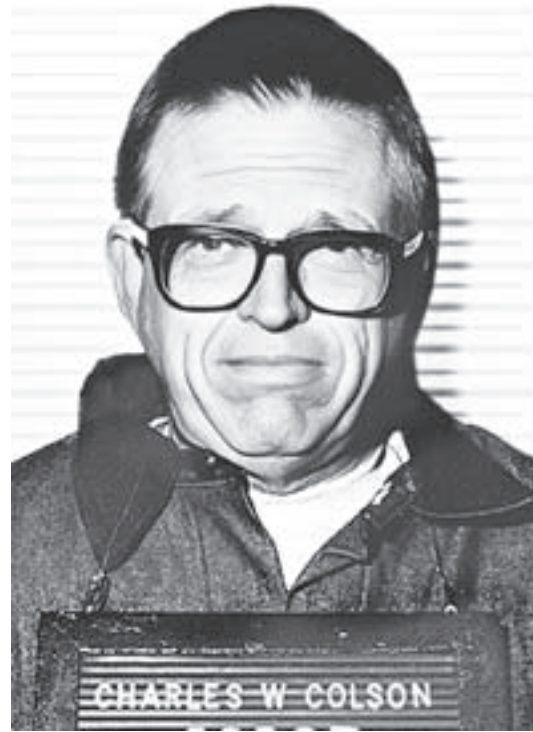
Watergate and becoming 22326

Before Chuck became federal prisoner number 22326, there was nothing in his life story to suggest that he would end up behind bars. Raised near Boston, Massachusetts, he graduated from Brown University, went on to become the youngest captain in the U.S. Marines Corps, and earned a law degree with honors. After that, he entered politics, a field for which he had a natural talent.

By 1969, Chuck reached the high point of a dramatic climb to influence and prestige.

As special counsel to President Nixon, he was one of the most powerful men in the country – until it all came crashing down.

When the Watergate scandal broke, Chuck found himself at the center of the storm as one of the "Watergate Seven." Under the pres-



Charles "Chuck" Colson's mugshot.

sure, Chuck retired into private life, but the threat of prosecution on Watergate-related charges still haunted him and his family.

At this critical moment, a close friend gave Chuck a copy of *Mere Christianity*, a book by popular British author C.S. Lewis that explores and defends the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The book sparked a series of conversations and encounters that led, finally, to Chuck's conversion.

"I spent an hour calling out to God," Chuck remembered in 2008, describing the night he spent sitting in his car, sobbing and praying. "I did not even know the right words. I simply knew that I wanted Him."

Defeat into victory

After telling God, "I surrender," Chuck developed a circle of Chris-

tian friends. They helped him make the hard decision to plead guilty to obstruction of justice in the Daniel Ellsberg case. A federal judge sentenced Chuck to serve one to three years in prison.

Chuck, who had been on top of the world, now found himself at the bottom – deprived of his freedom and separated from his family. He thought his life was over and that being labeled a "convict" would kill his chances of doing anything meaningful with his life.

"Was I ever wrong!" Chuck said decades later. "God used my greatest defeat for His glory!"

Chuck's experience at a federal prison camp, though painful for him and his family, wound up awakening him to a new passion in life: helping other prisoners.

While spending time with prisoners, he realized prison failed to "correct" incarcerated men and women. Many times, it left them more hopeless and criminally minded than before. He wondered what he could do to help them.

When he was released in 1975, Chuck tried to figure out what to do next. But he was haunted by the prisoners he had left behind, and by the promise he had made to Archie.

Keeping the promise

As he sought God's guidance, Chuck felt led in 1976 to found Prison Fellowship – with the goal of giving hope to prisoners. Over the coming decades, the organization would grow more than he ever dreamed, becoming the largest prison ministry in the country and the world.

Though he also went on to found The Colson Center for Christian Worldview and a popular national radio program, Chuck never forgot his promise.

He often visited prisons, speaking with prisoners, and he spent every Easter behind bars. In 2011, he even returned to Maxwell and spent Good Friday at a chapel service with incarcerated men.

Though the facility had changed, it brought back strong memories of his own days of incarceration, and it renewed his passion to show men and women that they, too, could come out of prison as positive leaders for society.

In March 2012, Chuck fell ill while speaking at a conference. Doctors discovered bleeding on his brain; he had suffered a stroke. Though he showed some initial signs of recovery, Chuck died from complications of the stroke on April 21.

Nationwide, people mourned the loss of one of the most important leaders of his generation.

Hundreds packed Washington National Cathedral a few weeks later to celebrate Chuck's inspiring life. At the memorial service, where former prisoners rubbed shoulders with members of Congress, the consensus was clear:

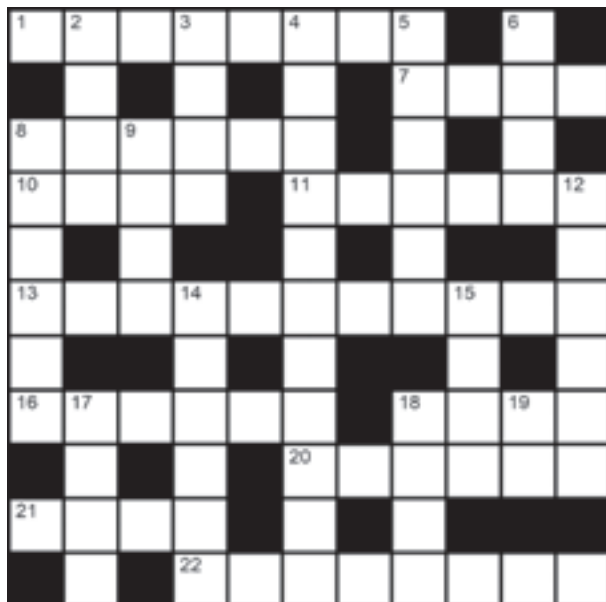
Though Chuck had gone through hard times in his life, and had left this earth, neither prison nor death had defeated him. God used both to achieve His glorious purposes.

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Golf course areas
- 7 End of grace
- 8 Pencil-mark remover
- 10 ___ the wiser
- 11 Slanted type
- 13 Cream for dry skin
- 16 Sign off from a computer
- 18 ...from a long way off
- 20 Newest software version
- 21 President after Reagan
- 22 Book "From Here to ___"



DOWN

- 2 60's hairdo
- 3 Sneaky ploy
- 4 Land cultivation
- 5 Spicy sausage meat
- 6 Himalayan legend
- 8 Surface of teeth
- 9 It means 'opposed to'
- 12 Arrow poison
- 14 Relieve with ointment
- 15 Lounge on it
- 17 Burden of proof
- 18 Yemeni port
- 19 "Breakfast ___ Tiffany's"

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



"I want you to visualise yourself not falling off the wall"

	3	5		8			
8				4		5	
9	2			6			
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2	4			7	1		
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			2			7	6

From violence to victory

• From page 1

As Tanya read the Bible, she found solace in the Word of God. Overcome with guilt for her crime, she prayed to God for a way to make amends.

"I am being a monster. I don't want people to hurt me but I'm hurting people."

The next morning, she found out that the woman she had beat up was being sent to the same county jail as her. Tanya was given a choice: to be moved to a different county or remain in the same county as the woman.

"My head spun in disbelief, because this is not something that happens normally! I knew right then that God had heard my prayer, and this was my opportunity to put up or shut up."

When the woman came into the cell, Tanya could see that she was terrified. She approached her and assured her that she was safe. Tanya invited her to eat with her and they even started attending Bible studies together.

Over the next seven years, Tanya grew closer to God. In 2020, Tanya was finally released and she married her high school sweetheart.

However, in 2021, her brother passed away from a fentanyl overdose. Despite her grief, Tanya remains grateful to God. "I have many happy memories with [my brother] and I thank God for those every day."

Tanya is now a Christian author. Her book, *The Light You Bring* details her own story of meeting Jesus and she continues to write daily prayer devotionals.



Tanya has written a book of devotions to help people draw closer to God.

RHYTHM, RECOVERY AND REDEMPTION

BY HARRIET COOMBE

Lisa Fry's life has been marked by trauma and suffering for as early as she can remember. At just two years old, a sick man abused her so badly she had to be hospitalized.

"Then at four years old, a man overdosed in our home," she writes in her book, *RAW: Rhythm, Recovery and Redemption*. "I vaguely recall not being able to wake up his cold, stiff body. By five, my mom and dad had divorced and married new people. Oddly, this lowered my appreciation for life and proved people were replaceable."

Her parents were on their third marriages when Lisa was 16 and a rebellious teenager.

"I got pregnant and married the familiar – an abuser."

Over the next five years, she gave birth to a son and another daughter but her life spiraled into poverty and drug addiction after her husband introduced her to crack cocaine.

"Quickly I lost custody of my children," she shares. "The streets became my home and criminal behavior was my only form of income. My appetite for the next high ruled me and I thought of nothing or nobody but my next fix."

Lisa opened a 'massage parlor,'

telling herself that she would treat these prostitutes better than their pimps. When the police shut down her business, Lisa turned to a life on the streets.

"I did unimaginable acts to survive and feed my addiction," she admits.

Lisa felt imprisoned by her addiction, whether she was behind bars or not. In fact, it was during her time spent in the county jail that she would, "dry out long enough to have somewhat of a moment of clarity or at least a tug on my conscience."

Cut off from friends and family for years, Lisa was shocked when her father came to visit her. He had recently become a Christian and she could see the difference in him. He encouraged her to read the Bible and commit Scripture to memory. She accepted his challenge and began to read and memorize Scripture.

"I could quote many scriptures from memory, but none of them had penetrated my heart."

After her release, she returned to her old stomping grounds and her addictions. At her lowest point, she woke up in a gas station bathroom after taking an overdose of cocaine.

It was then that one of the Bible verses she had memorized came to her mind: "I set before you life or death, blessings or curses; therefore, choose life that both thou and thou seed shall live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

"I decided to stop chasing death and accept life – an eternal life! I learned that the word 'repent' was used as a German soldier's command to halt, about-face, and march in the opposite direction. There I stood with my back to my past, humbly marching toward the cross... I bathed in God's Word, listened to preaching while I slept, attempted to pray and attended church anytime the doors were open."

Lisa questioned whether God could really change her, but within a year, God had healed broken relationships and restored her custody of her children who were now teenagers. She got a job managing a Christian bookstore while studying for her GED. Having left school early to have her first child, she now got her diploma and began studying at a Christian college.

There were still times of suffering in Lisa's life, including her daughter



being in a terrible car accident, and the death of a beloved stepfather. Then Lisa had a terrible car accident after falling asleep at the wheel and was taken to the hospital in critical condition.

She recalls waking up in a trauma center with morphine running through her veins.

"That familiar taste in the back of my throat paralyzed me with immediate fear that dissolved my faith. Why would God allow the sleeping tiger of addiction to be woken inside of me?"

After almost 10 years of sobriety, Lisa returned to her addiction once more.

"My relapse into sin was shocking to others and myself. I might as well have looked toward heaven and screamed, 'No thanks, I'd rather have destruction, drugs, and death'... No one would ever choose to be molested, to become a slave to addiction, or to suffer from a mental illness, but I was choosing to be defeated by these things."

Lisa felt trapped by her addiction and returned to the criminal life she used to live. It wasn't long before she again found herself before a judge.

While awaiting sentencing, the fog of drugs lifted and she was prescribed medication for her mental health. She participated in Bible studies and resolved to serve God, even if there was a chance she might fail again.

When she was released, Lisa worried about whether she would be able to survive in the free world.

"Can I still choose God's way over

the sinful path that had constantly lured me back in? I must remember: not by my strength, but His."

She drew hope from Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Lisa started therapy after her release and faced her past – a lifetime of pain and suffering – hoping to break the cycle of pain and abuse.

"It was not until I realized how weak and weary I was that I allowed God to become my strength. The painful areas I feared, God carried me through."

Together, Lisa and her Savior walked the long road of restoration. She shares that she begged God to change her attitude and desires.

"Through this transformation, I no longer fit into the lifestyle of my past sin-filled choices. I have a new wardrobe – the robe of righteousness. It does not mean I am perfect, by far, but my wants, loves, and thoughts are of pure motive to become more like my Creator."

Lisa writes that, "We are all a product of our past, but we do not have to be a prisoner of our past. Some grew up in a godly atmosphere, while others experienced abuse, hunger, and darkness. However, I would go out on a limb and presume that every human being has been hurt, let down, betrayed, or disappointed by another person's actions. Granting others forgiveness was another milestone that catapulted my walk with God."

Lisa went on a journey of forgiving those who had hurt her. "When I took my abusers to the foot of the cross and turned them over to God, there was an intense release of pain. My victim role ended, for I no longer carried the weight of someone else's sin in sickness."

Lisa says the transformation of her mind continues to be a daily continual surrender to God.

"My life is not perfect by any means, but it is one of perseverance and the pursuit of God," Lisa writes. "God delivered me from my addiction, saved my soul from hell, and restored relationships in my life."

She now encourages others to come to Jesus, just as they are, and submit to Him.

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Truth of sin

Poem by Lisa Fry

I'll take your children away from you
Make you do the things you'd never do.

I will kill your next of kin...
During depression, I'll move right in.

I'll take away your lovely home
Day and night, the streets you'll roam.

Jumping from car to car with strangers –
I won't protect you from all the dangers!

Filled with shame, your parents you won't call.
Every time you get up – I'll make sure you fall.

I'll keep you down with such pain,
Even get you hooked on cocaine.

Without success, you'll keep seeking those thrills
Why don't you just try a handful of pills?

Money, drugs or sex: what will it be?
Try me, I'll make it all three.

I may let you drive a fancy car,
Might even take you really far...

I will send you to commit a crime
Then leave you busted without a dime.

The fun won't last because I'm the father of each lie
Fall in my trap, I just want you to hurry up and die!

After sin, your flesh will make you lust
To have your soul in hand in hell is a must.

Easily I'll take you down through there
It's not like you're saying any prayers.

I love how you will not read His Word
Or act like His voice you've never heard.

Even I know, with a sincere plead
God will knock me out of the lead.

It's your choice, but until we meet again
Thought you should know I was never your friend.

Now that you've heard Satan's side
Listen to God, He wants you to decide.

My child I know you have gone astray
Please let me show you a better way.

My Son died, so you I could forgive
Allow me in your heart to begin to live.

Honest struggle

Poem by Lisa Fry

It appears I don't care
Living life as a dare
Using God's name to swear
Claiming life just isn't fair

At times I push God away
Don't thank Him for the day
Or for the price he did pay
What else is that to say?

This curse of self-will
Enough power to kill
Submitting takes no skill
Yet I'm stuck climbing this hill

If on God's name I call
He will break down this wall
He'll catch me when I fall
Still, I continue to stall

Unsure how to let go
Even though the Bible I know
Blocking the Holy Spirit's flow
Dancing hand-in-hand with my foe

How did I let this begin?
Rejecting Him – choosing sin
Comfort zone in the devil's den?
Knowing I must look within

Still God I betray
Progress on delay
Keeping help at bay
There's got to be another way

I don't know how to trust
Even though, I know it's a must
After sin, I lust
Life's become a disgust

Lord, take this burden from me
I want these demons to flee
You say You'll set me free
Who is it I'm meant to be?

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Listen closely as I call
Look deeply, reveal all
Safely, I'm curled up in a ball

My life I do waste
Remove from me this taste
Please don't make haste
Chip away the layers of paste

Satan is such a liar
Tired of walking this tight wire
Birth in me true desire
Ignite in me a fresh fire

Remove from me this shame
Remind me life is no game
There's no one else to blame
So I'll stop and call on Jesus name

About Crossroads

The Crossroads Prison Ministries mentorship program connects you with mentors who help you study the Bible.

Mentors write to you, answer your questions, share stories from their own lives, help you see how God is speaking to you through His Word and encourage you to continue to grow in your faith.

Through the mentorship program, Crossroads offers more than one dozen different correspondence Bible study courses that each contain up to 14 lessons.

Each course is designed to help you learn more about God and how to follow Him.

If you are interested in joining the program, please fill out the attached application form and mail it to us today!



Name: _____
First Last

ID #: _____

Date of Birth: MM | DD | YYYY Earliest Release Date: MM | DD | YYYY

Gender: _____ Complete Mailing Address: _____

Referred by: **CHAL** Institution _____ Housing _____

Prefiero el curso en español. Street or PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

STUDENT COMMITMENT

I will finish each lesson I receive in a timely manner and, with the help of my mentors, I will complete each course that I start. I agree that Crossroads may use anything I submit, such as my picture, testimony, writings or artwork, for promotional purposes or to further its mission.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

When you have completed this form, please return it to:
Crossroads Prison Ministries | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900
Crossroads Prison Ministries Canada | PO Box 5837 | Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

I know my worth



Nate Johnson with his wife, Rosa.

Fomer prisoner now a pastor

Nate Johnson popped into his prison’s chapel service, planning to slip out after a few minutes to lift weights in the gym.

That day, the chaplain was preaching on John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The chaplain spoke with such conviction that he caught Nate’s attention.

“The chaplain was preaching his heart out, and it went straight to my heart,” he says.

“I had listened to that verse before, but this time I *heard* it. I did some things I could not forgive myself for – I stole from my dad while he was dying. I finally heard that God forgave me because of what Jesus did, and it changed my heart.”

That was more than 25 years ago, and it was the beginning of a new path that involved Crossroads Prison Ministries and other programs as Nate soaked up as much learning as he could.

After his release, he moved in with his mother, worked, attended church, and initiated contact with his estranged wife, Rosa, and their children. As Nate showed over time that he was truly a changed man, he and Rosa worked to re-establish their relationship.

Unlike their first attempt, this second chance was built on faith.

“We struggled for years, but we were determined that we were supposed to be back together,” Nate shares.

“We learned to trust God with each other. We had to see that it was not our job to change one another. I had to trust God to change her as He wanted. And she had to trust God to change me. Once we saw that, we have been best friends ever since.”

Nate attended Wheaton College to earn a degree through the Charles W. Colson Scholarship. That led to work as a re-entry specialist and then to a post as an assistant pastor of a church in Chicago. After 10 years as assistant pastor, Nate was promoted to lead pastor in July 2023. With his promotion, Rosa became the first lady of the congregation, playing a vital role in the church’s ministries.

“I couldn’t do it without her,” Nate says.

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

CPM instructors from churches across the world guide students in their walks with Christ through correspondence Bible studies and letters of encouragement. For more information, visit cpministries.org.

It may be hard to imagine what it’s like for a child to grow up without any love in his life, but that’s what happened to South African Daniel Greyling.

“I had no love in my life at all,” the 35-year-old prisoner tells Challenge News.

“I was almost murdered by my stepfather when I was three. He was an abusive alcoholic. My mother left him after that happened.”

Daniel was smoking marijuana by the time he was 10. Meth and heroin abuse were next, followed by crime, and he was arrested for the first time when he was 14, for housebreaking.

“I was a part of the criminal life almost all my life due to a hard and challenging youth,” he admits. “I was an angry person with violent tendencies.”

When he was 16, his biological father, reached out to him, saying he wanted to be a part of Daniel’s life, but unfortunately the reconnection didn’t last and “my dad pushed me away to be with his stepchildren”.

At 19, Daniel himself became a father but again, was denied the chance to forge a family bond because, he maintains, he was forced out of his life.

“I went on to accept that I was not good enough to be happy in life so I hurt people to make them feel the pain I was going through,” Daniel remarks sadly.

“Later on I was blessed with a daughter and felt life was changing but once again lost that happiness after her mother had an affair with my brother. That’s when I gave up on life and ended up on the streets.”

He discovered first-hand how brutal life on the streets was when he



Daniel Greyling says he is no longer angry at the world and instead tries to help people.

was beaten into a coma and lost his hearing in his left ear at the age of 30.

Feeling hopeless and depressed, Daniel decided to turn to God.

“All my life people told me about God and the good He did in their lives. They told me He was a living and good God and wanted me to stop the life I was living.”

“I decided to let God make me a better person so I became a Christian when I was 30.

“I started doing good to people

and in 2021 I saved a 14-year old girl from being sold to Nigerian sex traffickers.”

The best part of becoming a Christian is that “I know I am worth more than all the riches in the world.

“I am no longer so angry at the world and instead of hurting people I help them.

“I would like to tell people not to push God out of their lives. Let Him be in control and good things will come.”

THE CHAINS HAVE BEEN BROKEN

Cheslin Janse, a man from the neighbourhood of Edenpark in Rosedale, shares his life journey filled with tragedy, grief, choices, and eventual redemption.

Born in George, Cheslin’s early years were filled with struggle after struggle. At a young age, he moved to Pacaltsdorp to live with his godparents due to his biological mother’s inability to care for him.

“They accepted me as their own,” Cheslin recalls. “As time went on, I started calling them Dad and Mom.”

But one afternoon he returned home from school to find his godmother gone. His godfather, struggling with alcoholism, explained that she had left.

“To me, this was normal because, at that age, I did not know much about life,” Cheslin shares.

Eventually his godfather met a new woman, who cared for Cheslin while his godfather worked. One evening, after an argument with his girlfriend, Cheslin’s godfather took his own life.

“From that day, my life was never the same again. I went to live with my biological mother and stepfather in Harmony Park. Day by day, I asked myself why life was so unfair.”

Cheslin dropped out of school by grade 5, turning to marijuana, pills, and meth to numb his emotions. At 17, he joined a gang, seeking belonging and an outlet for his anger and grief.

“I started stealing at home, and my family started to fear me... I started robbing school children in the town,” he admits.

Cheslin’s criminal activities escalated, resulting in multiple stints in juvenile correctional facilities. Eventually, his crimes, including truck hijacking, human trafficking, and home robbery, landed him an eight-year prison sentence. Cheslin hardened himself, blocking any thoughts of change.

In a surprising turn of events, Cheslin met a man who helped introduce him to Jesus Christ.

“Something wonderful happened – a feeling inside me that I cannot describe to anyone,” Cheslin recounts. “The Lord my God spoke to me.”

Cheslin put his faith and trust in Jesus as his Lord and Saviour.



STOCK PHOTO

“Today, I live like a new person, even though I am in prison. But the chains of sin have been broken over my life... The Lord says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” The most wonderful thing is that my family is in contact with me again.”

Cheslin says to those who think there is no hope for them: “The Lord wants to give you what the world cannot give you, and that is eternal life. The Lord can give life to everyone if you accept Him. This is my testimony. Romans 8:28 says, ‘And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.’”

The name of Jesus

For salvation	“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” - Acts 4:12
For baptism	“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” - Matthew 28:19
For gathering	“For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them.” - Matthew 18:20
For prayer	“You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.” - John 14:14
For discipline	“So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.” - 1 Corinthians 5:4-5
For universal subjection	“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” - Philippians 2:10-11
For everything	“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” - Colossians 3:17

Helping prisoners find freedom

BY JANICE TEO

It was a late Saturday night like many others before. Western Australian Steve McKinnon, then a 20-year-old youth worker, was wandering around the city of Perth looking to connect with as many street kids as he could.

He found them – a group of about 15 who had just missed the last bus home.

“What are you going to do now, guys?” he asked them. “You’ve got no ride home.”

“Ah, don’t worry mate, we’ll just steal a couple of cars no worries,” they replied nonchalantly.

“No don’t do that,” Steve said, “come in my car. I’ll get you home.”

So 15 teenagers – many of whom had been drinking – piled into Steve’s Datsun 120Y. Not surprisingly, he was stopped by the first police car that saw them.

“The cops thought I’d stolen the car,” Steve laughs as he recalls this story to *Challenge News*.

They searched the car expecting to find drugs but found nothing. “You’re clean but overloaded,” they told Steve. “You’re going to have to let them out.”

“But they’ll just go steal some cars and that’ll be heaps more trouble for you,” Steve reasoned with them.

“Just let me take them home this one time.”

Deciding that would be the lesser of two evils, the cops let him go.

The incident had the most unexpected effect on Steve’s passengers.

“Now we know there’s a God,” they said. “Cos we know you’re a Christian – and for sure God saved you tonight. Anyone else would have been arrested. And cos He saved you, He saved us as well!”

Steve was indeed a Christian – he was raised in a Christian home and at the age of nine he made a personal decision to follow God.

“Young as I was, I understood that God loved me, but it was the fact that He would die for me that got hold of my heart,” the 55-year-old shares.

“I felt just as it says in the song *Amazing Love* – ‘Amazing love, how can it be, that You, my God would die for me.’ And I also knew even then that something was required of me.”

Steve has always felt led to help the marginalised, lost and broken in society. His father wanted him to follow the more conventional path to success and become an engineer, but Steve went into youth work instead. That’s how he ended up with 15 kids in the back of his Datsun. Following their declaration, they now believed in God because he didn’t get arrested.

Steve jumped at the opportunity and told them that in that case, he would take them to church that Sunday.

At that service the pastor, who



Steve McKinnon

prison and didn’t visit Him.” Since then, Steve’s overarching passion is to bridge what he sees as a chasm between the church and the streets, to be the “repairer of the breach.” (Isaiah 58:12)

“If those in need could connect with a church community of love, hope and faith, they would be helped.”

From youth work, Steve became the WA coordinator of Christian charity TEAR Australia and three years ago was appointed state manager of Prison Fellowship WA.

Prison Fellowship is the brainchild of American Charles Colson, who went to prison in 1974 for his part in the Watergate scandal and became a Christian while behind bars. He established the organisation in 1976 convinced the only answer to crime was new life in Christ. [See his story on page 2].

Prison Fellowship Australia was established in 1981. The organisation, which is funded by donations, runs 10 programs, all conducted by trained volunteers.

The programs include inmate visits, camps, Bible studies, court chaplaincy, family support and post-release help with jobs and accommodation. The WA branch has about 120 regular volunteers.

“At Prison Fellowship I see God working without me doing very much at all,” Steve says. “We just present the Gospel [the good news about Jesus Christ] material and actually see God actively working and changing prisoners’ lives right in front of our eyes. God brings wholeness, healing and restoration.”

When asked what part of the Gospel message touches inmates the most, Steve doesn’t hesitate to answer: “Forgiveness.”

“Many of them have friends or family who can’t forgive them and many can’t forgive themselves, so to hear that God forgives them – it’s powerful and life-changing. It breaks them for the better and the tears start to flow. They cling to it.”

“I don’t know how successful I’ve been, but I’ve tried to stay true to what I feel is my calling to be that bridge for God.”

I rebuilt my life with a new foundation

BY AMY CAIN

Bradford’s world had collapsed around him. Although he had grown up in a Christian home, his family hadn’t practiced prayer or Bible study outside of Sunday services, so he never learned to follow God or live life according to His will. After building the foundation of his life on selfishness and sinful acts, he found himself in a cold, lonely jail cell.

“From early in my life, I was enslaved to sexual sin, which... ultimately culminated in my first arrest in January of 2001,” he shares. “Sitting in the county jail that night, I finally invited Jesus into my life and turned my life over to Him – or so I thought.”

After serving two years in prison, Bradford was released. He attempted to stay on the right path, but without a solid foundation, he fought a losing battle.

“In hindsight, I only turned over the problem areas of my life, the parts I knew needed to change. And while I began to learn a little bit more about God, I still didn’t really get to know Him,” he admits. “As a result... I began backsliding into my old sinful behaviors, which ultimately led me back to prison in 2010. It was not until this second time around that I asked Him to be my Lord and Savior – turning all of my life and will over to Him.”

Sentenced to life in prison, Bradford wasted no time diving into God’s Word and developing a relationship with Him.

“For the first time in my life (at age 46), I finally read the entire Bible cover to cover,” he recalls. “What I found was astonishing. Time and again, I discovered verses that could have been written either directly to me or about me. I also quickly began to recognize the Bible, God’s Word, as the infallible truth... I was truly blown away the first time I read chapter 7 of Paul’s letter to the church at Rome, as he perfectly described my experience with my sexual addiction.”

In 2012, Bradford signed up for the Crossroads mentorship program to supplement his own studies.

“I have greatly enjoyed and benefited from these Crossroads courses. They have helped increase my Bible knowledge and appli-

cation of God’s Word,” he says. “Part of what I like most about Crossroads is the student-mentor relationship... Receiving the letters of support has been a great source of encouragement, and being able to have a spiritual pen pal has been a true blessing.”

After completing Tiers 1 and 2 of the Crossroads program, Bradford eagerly signed up to study the seminary-level courses in Tier 3. In his Tier 3 application, he reflected on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders: “What I relate to most is the last part of that Scripture. For when my house (my life), which had long been built on dirt, finally fell, ‘the ruin of that house was great.’ But fortunately, I have rebuilt it with God as the foundation (and Jesus the Chief Cornerstone).”

In addition to faithful Bible study, Bradford works as a legal clerk in his facility’s law library, helping others fight their cases while also fighting his own. He also participates in a program called Word-Masters, which teaches sermon writing and public speaking skills. Although he used to hate writing and fear public speaking, he now eagerly shares the Gospel through the written and spoken word.

“I have had opportunities to ‘preach’ during family events here, and I send written copies of the essays out to many friends and family, including my previous Crossroads mentors,” he said. “It blows my mind that God has me now sharing His Word in such a way.”

Holding on to the hope that he will be released from prison one day, Bradford has big plans for serving God and helping others through his life experience.

“God has also put on my heart and in my head a growing number of ministry ideas for when I get out of prison,” he says, noting that he wants to focus on awareness and prevention of the crimes that he committed in his former life. “I will leave it up to God to see what doors He opens – starting with the doors of this prison. But I will take any opportunity to preach and teach His Word and to share my testimony.”

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

CPM instructors from churches across the world guide students in their walks with Christ through correspondence Bible studies and letters of encouragement. For more information, visit cpministries.org.



Steve with his family.

DISCOVERING TRUTH



Prison Fellowship volunteers sharing Bible studies with prisoners. Photo courtesy of Prison Fellowship.

WORDS FOR THE HEART

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Welcome to this Bible Study. Read slowly what I have written. If you have a Bible, look up the reference verses given, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your soul through them. – ALAN BAILEY

Mark 6:3-29

INTRODUCTION

WE ARE SEEING how rapidly Mark deals with the happenings he is telling us about. He keeps the story moving, letting us see how busy Jesus was and how involved He was with people. No doubt, Jesus showed love and compassion even though He was continually criticised by certain religious figures. Today we see how his own people at Nazareth could not acknowledge His superior powers but wanted Him to be no different from themselves. So, we take up the narrative at Chapter 6, verse 4.

Verses 4-6 *Jesus said to them, "Only in His home town is a prophet without honour." He could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them. And He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.*

Family members and local people would not give honour to Jesus, denying that He was any different from themselves. Now Jesus

performed miracles where there was faith, where people looked to Him as God's servant. In this case, faith was missing so the ministry was small. This meant that Jesus would go elsewhere.

Verses 7-11 *Calling the Twelve to Him, He sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. These were His instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave as a testimony against them."*

The Lord sent out His disciples so that they could tell out the message about the coming of Christ into the world and to call for repentance from sin. As they were able to perform healings and deliverance from demons, their genuineness was proved. They were also learning by this experience. They had to trust in God for their daily needs, and expect certain people to show them hospitality. If some refused to accept them, they were to show their disapproval in a commonly understood way (shaking off the dust).



Jesus sent the Twelve Disciples out two by two. Photo: BiblePics.

Verses 12, 13 *They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.*

Their message was that all people needed to turn to the Lord confessing their need of forgiveness. This is repentance – realising that one's attitude to God needs to change. With all the healings occurring, there was quite an impression being made and the Word of God was being spread.

Verses 14-16 *King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well-known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in Him." Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago." But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"*

Gossip was rife and people were trying to explain why these signs were showing. They thought of John the Baptist, not because he had been responsible for miracles, but because he was obviously a man sent from God. Elijah was mentioned because he was an outstanding prophet of long ago. This meant that others thought of Christ as just another prophet. But Herod was most likely disturbed by the possibility that the one he had beheaded had come back. He had beheaded John with great reluctance as we will read.

Verses 17-20 *For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.*

We readers are now being given the background to this reference to John the Baptist. All this has happened in the recent past. Herodias was obviously angry with John and wanted to somehow get even with him. The whole family of Herods were nasty people with a poor reputation.

Verses 21-25 *Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading*

men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me anything you want, and I'll give it to you." And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" "The head of John the Baptist," she answered. At once the girl hurried to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Here is a sad example of treachery, of vengeance on the part of one and weakness on the part of another. We may well ask why God would allow such an occurrence, but it is no different from the way others before him had been treated and certainly no different from the way people were to treat the Lord himself. He was to be publicly crucified, though a perfect man. It seems that messengers from God were always in danger of violence.

Verses 26-29 *The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.*

Old Testament kings seemed to do whatever they wanted to do without question. A great deal of injustices occurred, and here in the New Testament is another one. No doubt John the Baptist's death was mourned by many, especially his disciples. (There were those who stayed by his ministry, being loyal always.) And, as we will see, the Lord was also saddened, especially because the act of execution was an evil.

CONCLUSION

The happenings we have read about today all occurred because of the two-by-two outreach into the country with the message of the Kingdom of God. Undoubtedly many were blessed and others were indifferent. The demise of John the Baptist was a shock to all and would not have been generally well received. As always, people were divided in their reaction to the challenge of God's truth. The call comes to us also: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Where we stand is of great importance. Can we say, "He is my Lord and Saviour?"

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DELIVERY?

IN A MOTHER'S womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?" The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

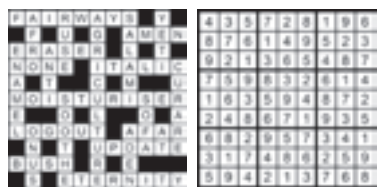
The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us."

The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is she now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of her. It is in her that we live. Without her this world would not and could not exist." Said the first: "Well I don't see her, so it is only logical that she doesn't exist." To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive her presence, and you can hear her loving voice, calling down from above."

Based on a story published October 2009 by author Wayne Dyer, originally adapted from a story by Henri J. M. Nouwen.



HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

OUR PROBLEM:	Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)	ADMIT
GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)	COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47).
He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a fellow prisoner who is a Christian, or your Prison Chaplain.
2. Ask a friend or family member to bring you a Bible. Ask the Prison Chaplain to sign you up to a correspondence discipleship program.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Find out if your prison has church services and attend them regularly.

AS A NEXT STEP:

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

Please send me: Bible
 Some 'starting off' literature
 Information on a helpful church

* Please check and write clearly *

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Send to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, 2634 Drake Road, Lebanon Ohio, 45036

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country



Leaving old paths

THERE ARE MANY metaphors for life and one is walking a path, which is following a route created by others. There are times in our lives when we look at the path we are on and we recognise it's leading us towards disaster. Do you feel that way about your future? What do we do if we are on the wrong path?

Here are three suggestions:

First – Repent. This is a term the Bible uses which means stop the direction you are going and turn back. Second – Replace. You need something new; replace your old path or actions with something new. Third – Refuse. There is always the desire to go back to what you know. Don't do it. Refuse to go back. Find a new path following Jesus.



St. Louis Cardinals designated hitter Matt Carpenter attempts a bunt in the fourth inning against the Colorado Rockies in June 2024. Photo Keith Gillett/Icon Sportswire via Getty Images)

INJURY IGNITES FAITH

BY ALLIE SCRIBNER

A torn ligament in his arm threatened to derail Matt Carpenter’s major league baseball dreams when he was only a junior in college. His recovery and return to the field didn’t go spectacularly.

“I was awful,” he told Sports Spectrum. “I cried myself to sleep. I was distraught.”

Faced with the possibility of losing his dream, Matt decided to trust Jesus with his future, and He brought the turnaround.

Matt Carpenter was born in Galveston, Texas. His father, Rick, played baseball in college and his mother, Tammie, played softball when she was young. His older brother, Tyler, was a minor league

baseball player with the New York Mets. So Matt was born into a family of baseball players.

Matt was a star at Elkins High School. He was a three-year first-team all-district performer and two-time all-state tournament team selection. He holds his high school record for most career hits.

Matt went to play at Texas Christian University (TCU); however, his freshman season was rough with only a .289 batting average. In the next season, however, he was the second-best batter on the team with a .349 average.

Matt expected to have an incredible Junior season at TCU, but in the eighth game, he suddenly tore a ligament in his elbow while throwing to home plate from first base.

He needed a “Tommy John sur-

gery,” which takes a ligament from your arm or leg to replace the torn one. The surgery is most common for pitchers and is actually rare in other positions in the field.

He was the first player at TCU to undergo that surgery.

Matt began to gain weight. His grades began to fall. He lacked discipline in his life.

He had grown up in a Christian home. He simply didn’t carry an active faith into college for the first few years.

The injury caused him to reexamine his faith. He began going to church again. He believed and hoped and prayed for a return in baseball.

Unfortunately, he fell flat. Matt despaired.

“It was that moment I realised, this isn’t about me,” he says. “There was so much relief there. From that point on, it literally changed me. I went into [the next season], I played with a new fire, just completely different.”

Due to his injury, Matt was granted two more seasons – a so-called “medical redshirt.” When he was a junior, he was named second-team all-conference at third base with 48 runs scored.

Matt was on a roll. During his senior season, he led the team to the College World Series with a batting average of .333 and 11 home runs.

He ended his college career by being named second team all Mountain West Conference in 2006, 2008, and 2009. He broke school records for playing the most games at 241.

After college, he didn’t know if

he would play baseball again. He wanted to play MLB but was not sure he would make the cut.

But Matt was not worried because he trusted God.

“This might have been the last baseball game I could have ever played,” he said. “I was ok with it.”

That same year, the Saint Louis Cardinals drafted him in the 13th round.

Three years later, Matt was nominated as the Cardinals’ Organization Player of the Year.

He led with the most hits, runs scored and doubles in 2013 in the major leagues. He was given the Silver Slugger Award, the first second baseman in the Cardinals’ franchise history to win it.

Matt has also played for the New York Yankees, the San Diego Padres and the Texas Rangers. “The game of life, I

have no control over,” he says. “The game of baseball I have no control over. All I have is my faith.”



Matt Carpenter. (Photo by Scott Audette/MLB Photos via Getty Images)

nudge WITH KARL FASEE

Permanent joy is possible

MANY SPORTING STARS when interviewed after a spectacular victory will often say “I will never forget this.”

It is a strange thing to say. Of course, they will never forget this! So what do they mean? I often wonder if the point they are making is that this victory will give them lasting joy and fulfillment.

Joy is mostly elusive and transitory. It is hard to find and it is even harder to keep. It is why we often look for joy in the victorious or peak moments of our lives. When Paul the Apostle wrote to his friends he did so amidst very difficult circumstances. He was in jail, he was under pressure, his resources were low, yet he talks of joy and living a life of rejoicing. This was not about a victorious moment, but an ongoing state of joy that was not dependent on how life was treating him.

Paul’s joy was based on his relationship with Jesus. This meant he had confidence in the future rather than being dominated by anything he faced in the present.

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