

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



MAY 2018

Dear Mentor,

"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. . . . I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12–13).

Paul was in a dark, dank Roman prison when he wrote these words. While enduring great suffering and loneliness in prison, Paul found comfort in a visit from a friend.

Epaphroditus was sent by the church at Philippi to visit Paul and extend hope, **encouragement** and a gift of money. He traveled a grueling 600 miles to Rome to ensure Paul was clothed, fed and reminded that he had not been forgotten.

It was this visit from Epaphroditus that lifted Paul's spirits and helped shape Paul's letter to the Philippians. It was after a loving visit from his friend that Paul wrote that he could be "content in any and every situation" through Christ who gave him strength. If it wasn't for the selfless love Epaphroditus showed by visiting Paul, we would not have the book of Philippians today!

I am struck by the fact that the church at Philippi was the only church to send aid to Paul. They were the only community that remembered Paul in prison, and their representative, Epaphroditus, nearly died on the journey (Philippians 2:27).

The church at Philippi was one familiar with suffering. They themselves were under persecution at the hands of the Romans. This suffering formed in them **humility** and a deep **compassion** for Paul.

When I read this story of the Philippian church and Epaphroditus, I can't help but think about you. As a Crossroads mentor, you remember prisoners by "visiting them" through your letters. You are part of a modern-day Philippian church, moved by compassion and love to bring hope and encouragement to people in prison.

What can we learn from Epaphroditus as we write to our students?

- We can share with them in their suffering. You can offer words of comfort and hope. Have you gone through a time of difficulty or suffering in your life? Share this with your student and explain how God helped you through this time.
- We can show humility and compassion as we kindly guide and challenge our students. Instead of telling a student they are wrong, you could challenge them by asking, "Have you thought about _____?"
- We can encourage our students. Write something like this: "I know I can't fully understand the challenges you are going through, but I want to tell you _____." Or: "Even though you may feel like _____, I want you to know _____." Or: "I love the way you wrote _____ in your lesson."

As you write your next letter, try thinking about your student as a modern-day Paul—a man or woman who is being transformed by the power of the Gospel and has the potential to make an impact on the Kingdom right where they are.

Serving at your side,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

Have a question? You can contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450.

Feeding the 5,000: We have a part to play

By Dara Nykamp

Thanks to continued support from generous donors, Crossroads is now paying for all students' return postage—and students are responding! We have already received hundreds of letters from students thanking Crossroads, and Crossroads donors, for supplying prepaid postage. Most importantly, more and more students are returning Bible studies to be reviewed.

This past Monday, we received over 1,000 lessons from students. We are now receiving more than 4,500 lessons each week. And the number keeps growing!

This is reminiscent of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. In the book of Luke, Jesus sent the disciples into the surrounding communities to tell people about the Kingdom of God. As a result, thousands of people began following Jesus, hungry to learn more about Him. The crowd grew and grew until it was so big that the disciples became concerned about being in a remote place without much food available. They approached Jesus and asked Him what to do. He responded, "Give them something to eat" (Luke 9:13).



The disciples did not think they had enough to meet the people's needs. But God miraculously stretched what was available and made it possible to feed every person who was gathered. Everyone was satisfied, and baskets of food still remained.

Thousands of students are stepping forward, eager to learn about Jesus and how to follow Him. Each lesson returned is one more request for help to grow closer to Him. You, our mentors, have done an amazing job of helping us manage the increased flow of mail by mentoring additional students and reviewing lessons regularly. **However, as the number of students continues to grow, we will not have enough mentors to meet every student's needs.**

As Jesus said to the disciples when He sent them out again, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2).

We know that God will provide and that He has a plan to meet students' needs, but we need you to join us and share what you have to offer—your story.

Please tell a friend about your experience with Crossroads. Encourage them to join Crossroads as a mentor. Invite them to join you in telling students about the good news of Jesus Christ, and then watch as God takes the little each of us is able to offer and multiplies it to bring hope and healing to thousands of men and women behind bars.

We want to hear **YOUR** story!

Will you share your story with us? Why do you love being a Crossroads mentor? What spiritual growth have you seen in your students? How has your life changed since becoming a mentor? We would love to share your story with other mentors to build one another's faith and to celebrate what God is doing through this ministry. Your story might also encourage someone else to join Crossroads! If you would like to share your story/testimony, contact Aaron Mueller at amueller@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450 ext. 2245.