

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



OCTOBER 2019

Dear Mentor,

I first heard the phrase “Prayer changes things” many years ago. At the time, prayer was a bit of a mystery to me. I prayed that God would change my circumstances and open the prison gate . . . but that didn’t happen immediately. I prayed for fast healing from a serious surgery . . . but that didn’t happen immediately, either. I began to realize that God’s answers sometimes come in very unexpected ways.

Looking back, I believe God was using my prayer time to help me come to terms with my circumstances and to build my perseverance and my knowledge of Him. He was also teaching me how to support a friend in need through the example of my friend, who stayed by my side for a whole day when I couldn’t be home alone after the surgery.

During both of those times, through prayer, my heart began to open and make room for God’s peace. I learned to release my fear and anxiety and my attempt to control what I couldn’t. I learned to let go and let God take control.

Prayer has the power to deepen our relationship with Jesus and help us understand His plans for us. As we develop the discipline of prayer, He guides and teaches us. We learn to trust Him and His timing in answering our prayers.

Here are some ideas for your letters this week:

- Share Philippians 4:6 with your students: **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”** Remind your students that prayer includes both petitions (requests for God to meet our needs or the needs of others) and thanksgiving (gratitude for the blessings God has given us). Why should we petition for ourselves and others if God already knows all our needs and desires? In my case, my petitions revealed needs I wasn’t even aware of at the time. Laying our petitions at Jesus’ feet helps us let go of our anxiety and worries, resting in the knowledge that He is in control.
- Encourage your students to persevere in prayer, even when it seems like God isn’t answering their prayers or when God answers their prayers in a way they don’t fully understand. We’re told in 1 John that we can have full confidence that God hears every prayer and will answer them according to His timing and His will. **“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him”** (1 John 5:14–15).

Do I believe prayer can change things? Yes, I do, knowing our prayers may not be answered in the way we expect. Although situations or difficulties may not change in the way we want them to, prayer changes *us*. It certainly changed me.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery  
Church Mobilization Director

## SURVEY COMING SOON!

We want to know how we can serve you better! This month, we’ll be emailing you a survey (or mailing it if we don’t have your email address) to ask you what kind of additional training would be valuable and relevant to you as a mentor. Please return the survey to us by **October 22**.

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

# NEWS & NOTES FOR MENTORS

**invite + unite (Greater Chicago area Crossroads gathering):** In collaboration with the Institute of Prison Ministries, Crossroads will be hosting a gathering for mentors and prospective mentors in the greater Chicago area. It will be held at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College on October 12, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The event will feature Douglas Cupery, director of church mobilization for Crossroads, who will share fresh vision and stories of ministry impact. There will also be a brief training workshop for anyone interested in becoming a mentor. Refreshments will be provided, and all attendees will receive a free pack of note cards featuring beautiful art created by Crossroads students. Please RSVP to Joni at [jjessup@cpministries.org](mailto:jjessup@cpministries.org) by **October 4**.

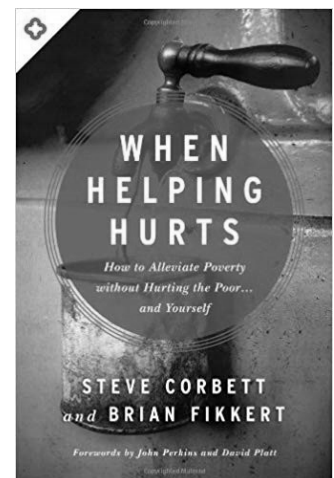
**Contact information on the mentor portal:** You can easily update your contact information at any time using the mentor portal. Once you are logged in, click “Edit My Profile.” You will see your name, email address, home phone, mobile phone and mailing addresses. You can have up to three addresses saved in the mentor portal at once; make sure that your current mailing address is set to the correct address. **If you use the portal, please take a moment to check your profile to ensure that all your information is accurate. Remember to update your profile whenever any of your information changes.** All updates you make will be automatically entered into our database!

**Placing lessons on hold through the mentor portal:** We have updated the instructions on the “Hold Lessons” tab on the mentor portal to better explain the process. To ensure that you do not receive any lessons when you are unable to review them, we ask that you **enter a stop date that is one week before the time you need your lessons held.** For example, if you will be gone from November 1–November 9, you would select **October 25** as the date to stop sending lessons and November 9 as the date to resume receiving lessons. Please contact us at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) if you have any questions.

**Book recommendation from Doug:** I recently read the book *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. It helped me realize that poverty is about so much more than a lack of money. Poverty also relates to deficiencies in our relationships with God, with others and with creation. We all experience aspects of those types of poverty in our lives.

The book does not specifically mention people in prison, but it is relevant to those we serve through Crossroads. Many of our students come from financially impoverished communities and struggle with financial poverty in prison and when they are released.

When we fail to see brokenness around us, we can do more harm than good when trying to help someone dealing with poverty. This book discusses the reality that God is working to reconcile everything to Himself and has invited all of us to partner with Him to repair what is broken in the world.



If you would like to read this book, you can purchase it through [chalmers.org](http://chalmers.org) or most online or brick-and-mortar bookstores.