



Graceville, FL

I am currently doing a 25-year sentence that I got back in 1999. My entire life I have done things my way. And when I came to prison, I didn't change. If things didn't work out I would try something different the next time. I have been through some really hard times in this place. I was 21 years old with 25 years to do. Over the years, I've been beaten and stabbed. I felt like I was on my own. My family didn't write or help me in anyway. I had messed my life up. I thought about just giving up a few times, but I was too hard headed. I thought that if I gave up then they would win. So I just couldn't. I've been put in some bad places. But on November 28, 2012 I was ready to give up again. I had tried everything. All but one. So I prayed. I asked my Lord Jesus to come into my life. I asked for forgiveness, peace, love and protection. I also asked Him to let me know if He heard me. The next day I got a letter from my mom. I just knew for sure that that was my answer. It's been 10 years. Over time the Lord has made so many changes in my life. All of my family is back in my life and I feel their love. The Lord protects me daily. I am at peace with myself. God is so awesome. I read my Bible daily and am always thanking the Lord for everything He has done for me. I know I am not perfect, but I still try. I just like to share His word, and I

hope I do His will someday.

R. D.

Fort Worth, TX

For eight years I've been walking in the wilderness and been divorced. While on my own, I was helping about 40 homeless people, men and women, who, in return, I found out, were stealing me blind. I owned a lawn and landscape business, and it took seven of those eight years for those people to steal it away from me, and literally break me to a point that hurts so much I stopped caring, and I was to the point of possibly picking up an assault case, but God intervened. He told me to sit down and listen. So that's what I'm doing at this time, and I know in my heart this is the very last time I will ever be behind bars in this way. Back in 1997 I had a felony conviction of 20 years. I served 11 years flat on that, got out, finished my parole with no problems, was married, bought a house, and started a business. I was blessed, but miserable in my marriage and decided to get a divorce and that's where the beginning of those eight years start to unfold. I've lost everything except my testimony, which has only become bigger and stronger, and now I can hardly open my mouth without my testimony, in part or in full just pouring out from my mouth. My faith has grown from the mustard seed to the size of a coconut and daily people are seeking me out for words of

encouragement. I'm 57 years old now, and I truly feel as if I've had my "Moses on the Mountain" experience, and that there is what seems to be a light of God's glory around me that draws people to me. Now I'm in deep study of God's Word for wisdom, knowledge, understanding, discernment, encouragement, commitment, mentoring, patience, love, humility, and kindness. I know I am to strive towards Christ-likeness, and to have His heart, so, through study, deep study, I've been obedient and fighting the good fight and allowing God's grace and glory to flow through me. I'm blessed coming in, and blessed going out by the words of my testimony, and I'm being transformed by the renewing of my mind. The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want. **G.A.**

Richmond, TX

I'm 51 years old and I am currently serving a 10-year sentence for family violence with six years done so far. All these years I never read what was intended in the Bible or ever read any of it. Don't get me wrong, I went to church with my grandparents on Sundays. But I really was young and hyper active as a youth. My parents divorced when I was 15 years old and I was diagnosed with ADHD at the early age of five years old. By the time I was starting high school, I was taken off my meds and dropped out of school and ran away from home. My life has been extremely rough. I've

had three kids by three different women. And have been in and out of jail for a while. I was on and off of drugs and working many jobs to make ends meet and support my ignorant lifestyle. After many years of misery and heartache, I was sentenced to 10 years, which is my third prison sentence. I signed up for the faith-based dorms program. Well, the Lord Jesus Christ has gotten my heart and my soul for sure. I am a grateful, born-again believer in Jesus Christ in the work He has done for me. My life has made a turn in the right direction and I've learned so much from Christ and I'm very grateful for all the wonderful brothers here and counselors and mentors. I am a new creation in Christ. Every day I can see the blessing of my obedience and focus on routines that I never used to do. God bless. **S.M.**

Taft, Oklahoma

I grew up going to church. I knew of God, and believed as a child. I am the oldest of three children and looking back I had a good childhood. I suppose that shows how anyone can fall into sin. I lost my mother to cancer when I was 12. I had prayed so hard she wouldn't die. I even prayed that God take me instead of her. God didn't answer these prayers. I was so angry, so betrayed, that I turned away from God. I started studying occult as a teenager and was a Wiccan for about 10 years. During this time I would drink, do drugs, and party. Though I did go to college and work as well. After a time, though, this life didn't satisfy me. I slept with women, not from love, sometimes not even from lust, but

from boredom and depression. I became addicted to pornography, so many sins, so many regrets. I felt depression since I was a teenager. In fact, I think it was the portal the devil used to enter into my life. Counseling only worked a bit. But all the counseling in the world doesn't help as much as finding and trusting in the Lord does. In my 40's, I found myself being arrested. I had never really been in trouble. Though, I'm sure that was simply due to God's grace. In one day, I lost my freedom. I lost my wife, we have since gotten a divorce, I lost my self-respect, and my house. I've lost my grandmother since being in. It's been hard. I had been attending church with my wife and kids. I had given up the occult, and considered myself a Christian. But I was a casual Christian at best. I have not followed God's path, but my own, even married, and having a good life, I still felt depression and dissatisfaction. So I prayed. I prayed for God to change me and make me a better person. He did it by sending me to jail. I still remember when I gave it all to God. I was in a cell that didn't have a working light. It was February and freezing. I had been in jail for a week, maybe two. There was a Bible I could read for a couple of hours a day when there was light from the small window. All I could do was sit in the dark and go over everything I have done in my life; the good, the bad, all my regrets and sins were laid bare before God and myself. I regretted so much. I sat there, in the dark, staring at the cinder block wall, and I prayed. I realized I was at the bottom of my well. I couldn't do anything, not for myself, not for my family, not for my

case. Sitting there, in that cold, dark cell, I put God in charge. I told Him I couldn't do it any more, He could. I put it all in His hands. Since then, I have felt such a change. My family has been taken care of. I found prayers answered, sometimes in unusual ways. God has spoken to me several times. The Bible is a constant encouragement. It truly is the living Word of God. All the doubts I had about myself and my low self-esteem have been redirected by God's transforming love. I know God will take care of me, and once I have learned what I need to, He'll see to my release. I'm studying the Word daily and going to enroll in Victory Bible College the next time it's offered. I may become a pastor, perhaps, just a scholar. Whatever I do though it will be because of God's grace unto His glory. I thank God He reached out to me and pulled me out of the pit of sin and doubt I was in. **W. B.**

Encouragement like flowers
Can brighten a way,
Turn storms into rain
Paint colors from grey.
Find good in the bad
Bring laughter from pain,
Lift up a spirit
Even loosen a chain.
Rainbows from darkness
Or a peek at the sun,
Blessings enjoyed
Or a moment of fun.
Sharing is easy
With a little each day,
Blossoms of joy
To brighten the day.
~ Jim Ness

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