

SECOND EDITION

Deepheart

UNBOUND



DC
019

THE
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCASTS

PAGE 17

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A MAGAZINE FOR THOSE INCARCERATED, THEIR FAMILIES, & ALL THOSE WHO SUFFER IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

FROM THE EDITOR

Hey, brother, or sister, what's up? My name is Michael. I want to personally welcome you into our Deep Heart... magazine. I know if we were to sit, side by side, with a fire, a lake, and a mountain scene, we would enter a conversation as sweet and upbeat as this setting below. You would sense my sincerity and feel comfortable to share your heart. My greatest desire is to connect with you, wherever you're at, and prove to you that your life-journey matters to so many yet awaiting your touch. We attempt to show you this in our articles.

I'm privileged to have been in hundreds of prisons, here and abroad, to touch and be touched by suffering. It is life-altering to be with fellow outcasts in 3rd-world countries facing unbearable prison conditions. In every one, even the hardest gangster sits to talk with us about our message. *Not one has ever walked*

away. Instead they want more. Why is this? Because it's not about us. There is a Presence beyond us. What if God is not the problem? Rather, it is in the way in which He is misrepresented. What if there is a breakdown and failure of such magnitude it has caused monumental heartache and subsequent cold-shoulder? Jesus is not a theology or a distant religious icon, but our living and ultimate Brother. He speaks a language of REAL that rings true and reaches into the broken hearts of all humanity. My brother, or sister, I beg you, don't give up. Don't let a bias or past experience prevent you from a new true experience. There is compassion, tailored by the Father, for you, and each person, everywhere, always. His love has no limits. He sees you by face, not by label.

You may whisper within yourself, *"If you only knew the real me you wouldn't be so accepting."* Oh, yes, I would. Even more so, because this is

exactly what I thought. These things here do not come out of a "nice-boy" church-goer. They come out of a God who rescued me from a 'hellhole.' So I can be there with you in a heartbeat, to listen, and understand. It doesn't matter one bit what anyone says. You are a unique individual still writing your story, that of an extraordinary outcast. Who knows the reward awaiting you now and later?

WE ARE NO ORDINARY PEOPLE. WE 'LIVE ON THE ROAD' IN A CONSTANT CLASH WITH HARD-CORE REALITIES. WHAT WE SPEAK IS OUT OF WHAT WE KNOW, FIRSTHAND. WE USE OUR WORDS AS OUR ARMS AROUND YOU, OF A CARING FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHER, OR SISTER. WE ARE WITH YOU. NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE AT, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, OR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, WE ARE ON YOUR SIDE AND WE LOVE YOU.



"YOU SEE, BROTHER. YOU CAN'T SHOW FEAR. IF A GRIZZLY CAME INTO OUR CAMP I'D RUN RIGHT UP TO IT AND PUNCH IT IN ITS FACE."

"REALLY? HUH. CUZ I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU RUN TO THE CAR LAST NIGHT AND LOCK THE DOORS WHEN THAT SQUIRREL STARTED MAKING NOISES?"

THOUGHT REPLACEMENT THERAPY ¹³⁰

The mind has no walls. It offers an open sky. *Smell the mountain air and feel the breeze of the lake. Touch the water and feel the warmth of the crackling fire. Be there... here.* We can take the thoughts that are captive to prison culture, and free them like birds from a cage. We can 'pre-think' (calculate) the launch of our next thoughts. Before impulses can force us into negative reactions, we can replace them by a response out of our intelligence; *"I will not go dark. I will go to a new 'place.' I will change this moment."* We call this thought replacement therapy or T.R.T. It is what we hope to bring you throughout this magazine. As a young man, I was completely ignorant to the words of God, which are the most profound form of thought replacement therapy. Countless men and women, documented throughout history, became extraordinary by learning to interconnect their will with their mind, heart, and creativity to overcome unbearable circumstances. We can go "someplace" beyond our surroundings. As you read this magazine, the idea is to open the first door, which is yourself, and find The Door leading you to places you never imagined.

[These numbers throughout are references listed on page 48]

We took this photo in Banff, Alberta, CA

Bro-to·col /'brōdē, kōl'

More than a mere word. A power to unite by seeing yourself in others. No matter what your backstory is, or how you see yourself, we see you and welcome you as our brother or sister. God says the way we treat others, He shall treat us —Mt.7:2+12.

BRINGING A CUTTING-EDGE SHOW TO PRISONS

For the past 15+ years we have been performing in prisons across the world, starting in Colombia, across South and North America, and reaching as far as Asia. We put on a dynamic show of music, world-class magic tricks, theater, cultural dances, martial arts demonstrations, comedy, and other artistic routines. When we saw the injustice and pain of so many suffering in prison, we began to create this show to bring a beautiful experience of real hope, creativity, laughter, and sincere love. Our goal is to offer you the best of our best, as this is what you deserve.

We do not represent, any group, church, or ministry. We each work common jobs to save up and support this vision.

55 COUNTRIES. HUNDREDS OF CITIES. 400+ PRISONS

SOME OF OUR ACTS:



EXTREME WAYS

SERVANT

MR. SEVEN ELEVEN

PHOENIX

MENDING THE PIECES

BREAKDANCE

RITMO GRANDE

RISE TO YOUR FALL

MAGIC SNOW

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

TAE KWON DO

DJ

FOREVER YOUNG

BRING ME TO LIFE



MINAS GERAIS, BRAZIL

BROTOCOL IS OUR PROTOCOL:

God does not see you as a prisoner or inmate, and neither do we. If you let me, I will draw you into the Father's embrace, because that's what we're trying to do here. It is marvelous to see men change as they begin to understand the depth of His love for them. It's what gets me up early in the morning to write these words to send to you. After our last edition, some of the guys told me they went through it too fast, so my team and I worked hard to pack this edition extra full, to give you a quality, immersive experience, hoping you can take your time and get 'lost' in these pages.

MICHAEL - AKA RAVEN-



RACHEL

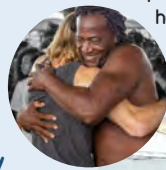


SARAH



RUTH

We created every detail of this magazine designed solely for you.



ELIZABETH



ABRAHAM



JOSHUA



DAVID

UPDATE: You may have heard on the news that Ruth fell 200 feet down a California mountain, on Christmas Eve morning. She broke her neck in three places. (Every time I repeat it, I recall my weeping and feel like it happens inside me.) There are too many issues to mention where your prayers surely helped in dealing with the physical, mental, and emotional devastation. (See Ruth's story page 13).

My situation is far less serious. One night last month I had to stay back, as the rest of Deep Heart drove to a California prison. While they were at the facility, excruciating agony hit me in the stomach. I've had a lot of pain in my life, but this affliction hit me so severe it triggered uncontrollable vomiting.

I texted my crew for help, but they were out of range. So I had to sit, walk and wait alone in darkness. Nowhere to escape. Nowhere to hide. Many of you know the feeling. When they got back Abraham drove, like a maniac, to a nearby random emergency ward where I would spend 6 days. They diagnosed "A Pancreatic Attack". The fix was surgery to remove the gallbladder. The doctor said the situation was life-threatening and often hereditary.

My choice is not to play 'the victim'. In my mongrel world, mere existence is a luxury so blaming God for bad times is out of the question. I fully accept 'crap happens' and not because God was playing Puppet-master.

I believe your prayers not only got me to the hospital, but to a capable doctor. He was fully depending on a medical "robot" to remove the gallbladder. But it broke down while I was unconscious and he was forced to complete the operation by hand. So, right now, I am 10,000 miles away, recovering from that surgery and working in the prisons of Brazil. I want to thank each of you, my brothers and sisters, who have prayed for us. When I heard that inmates around the country were praying for me, I was blown away: While you guys suffer in such hell, you care about me? Surely, a league of extraordinary outcasts. -Michael



Choose your own adventure (T.R.T.):

Let's go on an adventure. Don't worry, no charge, and we got it all planned out for you. We even got snacks (lol), so get in, sit back and tell me where you wanna go...

1. If you would like to roast marshmallows, go to page 43. 2. If you would like to play basketball, go to page 20. 3. If you would like to go to the ocean, go to page 42.

There are riddles and mind teasers hidden throughout the magazine. These are just for fun. Answers are on page 48. Enjoy!





Built by Those Who Have Been on Both Sides of Incarceration

Hi!

I wanted to reach out to you personally to let you know that YOU are not alone. I have been where you are and have most likely felt the same feelings that you're feeling right now. I know because I was incarcerated at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, CA.

My name is Becky and about 8 years ago, I was sitting in my cell longing for pictures from my family and friends to get me through each day. I like to use the phrase, 'filled my tank,' when talking about receiving pictures at mail call because they did just that. Instead of feeling a bit empty, I felt that I received a piece of my life on the outside and a reminder of who I was. This truly helped ME on my healing journey.

My journey lead my son, Joseph, and I to make it our mission to make it easier for family and friends to stay connected with their incarcerated loved ones. I know how important mail call is, and how great it felt to receive actual printed pictures from home. The ability to receive pictures of special moments and even just every day activities from family and friends on the outside played a huge role in my rehabilitation process.



I am now the Chief Operating Officer at Pelipost, the Photos-to-Prison App®, and am trying to spread this joy one photo at a time. I am gifting you a \$10 Photo Voucher to a PeliPALS prepaid photo account. This is enough for a special someone to send you a set a photos to begin sharing their world with you. I hope they bring you peace and comfort like photos used to bring me.

Sincerely,

Becky Calderon

PELIPOST CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Pelipost®

The Photos-to-Prison App

Strengthening Families, One Photo at a Time.

\$10 PHOTO VOUCHER IS AVAILABLE FOR THE **FIRST 10,000 REQUESTS.**

How Pelipost Works

1 THEY UPLOAD



Friend/ family/ penpals upload photos through Pelipost.



2 WE PRINT & SHIP



Pelipost prints and ships the next business day.

3

YOU RECEIVE



Photos arrive to your facility in about 5-7 business days.

How to Request \$10 Photo Voucher

- 1 Send **SASE** requesting your \$10 Photo Voucher to:

Pelipost
Attn: Customer Outreach
235 Apollo Beach Blvd. #508
Apollo Beach, FL 33572

- 2 Make sure to include the following information:

- Your Name
- ID Number
- Facility Name
- Facility Address

*Please allow 30 days to receive your \$10 Photo Voucher.
Offer valid to first 10,000 requests only. No Cash Value.*

Rated #1 in Quality Prints & Customer Service!



Photos arrive quickly and usually even before the date stated. Their customer service is responsive and quick to find a solution! I highly recommend this app!
- Shelly M.



I absolutely love Pelipost. My husband has been able to watch our son grow through pictures, and Pelipost has been such a blessing for our family.
- Kacy F.



You're amazing, Pelipost! You are the ONLY trusted app for sending photos to prison. You are our advocate and supporter. What you do for families with incarcerated LOs is priceless!
♥ - Meredith A.




PROUDLY SERVING THE CORRECTIONAL COMMUNITY SINCE 2016!

3. Give me food, and I will live; give me water, and I will die. What am I? ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ ¹⁵ ¹⁶ ¹⁷ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ ²⁰ ²¹ ²² ²³ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ ²⁷ ²⁸ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³² ³³ ³⁴ ³⁵ ³⁶ ³⁷ ³⁸ ³⁹ ⁴⁰ ⁴¹ ⁴² ⁴³ ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ ⁵¹ ⁵² ⁵³ ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ ⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶² ⁶³ ⁶⁴ ⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ ⁷¹ ⁷² ⁷³ ⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ ⁷⁶ ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ ⁷⁹ ⁸⁰ ⁸¹ ⁸² ⁸³ ⁸⁴ ⁸⁵ ⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ ⁸⁸ ⁸⁹ ⁹⁰ ⁹¹ ⁹² ⁹³ ⁹⁴ ⁹⁵ ⁹⁶ ⁹⁷ ⁹⁸ ⁹⁹ ¹⁰⁰ ¹⁰¹ ¹⁰² ¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁴ ¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶ ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁰⁸ ¹⁰⁹ ¹¹⁰ ¹¹¹ ¹¹² ¹¹³ ¹¹⁴ ¹¹⁵ ¹¹⁶ ¹¹⁷ ¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰ ¹²¹ ¹²² ¹²³ ¹²⁴ ¹²⁵ ¹²⁶ ¹²⁷ ¹²⁸ ¹²⁹ ¹³⁰ ¹³¹ ¹³² ¹³³ ¹³⁴ ¹³⁵ ¹³⁶ ¹³⁷ ¹³⁸ ¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴² ¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ ¹⁴⁸ ¹⁴⁹ ¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹ ¹⁵² ¹⁵³ ¹⁵⁴ ¹⁵⁵ ¹⁵⁶ ¹⁵⁷ ¹⁵⁸ ¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ ¹⁶² ¹⁶³ ¹⁶⁴ ¹⁶⁵ ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷ ¹⁶⁸ ¹⁶⁹ ¹⁷⁰ ¹⁷¹ ¹⁷² ¹⁷³ ¹⁷⁴ ¹⁷⁵ ¹⁷⁶ ¹⁷⁷ ¹⁷⁸ ¹⁷⁹ ¹⁸⁰ ¹⁸¹ ¹⁸² ¹⁸³ ¹⁸⁴ ¹⁸⁵ ¹⁸⁶ ¹⁸⁷ ¹⁸⁸ ¹⁸⁹ ¹⁹⁰ ¹⁹¹ ¹⁹² ¹⁹³ ¹⁹⁴ ¹⁹⁵ ¹⁹⁶ ¹⁹⁷ ¹⁹⁸ ¹⁹⁹ ²⁰⁰ ²⁰¹ ²⁰² ²⁰³ ²⁰⁴ ²⁰⁵ ²⁰⁶ ²⁰⁷ ²⁰⁸ ²⁰⁹ ²¹⁰ ²¹¹ ²¹² ²¹³ ²¹⁴ ²¹⁵ ²¹⁶ ²¹⁷ ²¹⁸ ²¹⁹ ²²⁰ ²²¹ ²²² ²²³ ²²⁴ ²²⁵ ²²⁶ ²²⁷ ²²⁸ ²²⁹ ²³⁰ ²³¹ ²³² ²³³ ²³⁴ ²³⁵ ²³⁶ ²³⁷ ²³⁸ ²³⁹ ²⁴⁰ ²⁴¹ ²⁴² ²⁴³ ²⁴⁴ ²⁴⁵ ²⁴⁶ ²⁴⁷ ²⁴⁸ ²⁴⁹ ²⁵⁰ ²⁵¹ ²⁵² ²⁵³ ²⁵⁴ ²⁵⁵ ²⁵⁶ ²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ ²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ ²⁶¹ ²⁶² ²⁶³ ²⁶⁴ ²⁶⁵ ²⁶⁶ ²⁶⁷ ²⁶⁸ ²⁶⁹ ²⁷⁰ ²⁷¹ ²⁷² ²⁷³ ²⁷⁴ ²⁷⁵ ²⁷⁶ ²⁷⁷ ²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰ ²⁸¹ ²⁸² ²⁸³ ²⁸⁴ ²⁸⁵ ²⁸⁶ ²⁸⁷ ²⁸⁸ ²⁸⁹ ²⁹⁰ ²⁹¹ ²⁹² ²⁹³ ²⁹⁴ ²⁹⁵ ²⁹⁶ ²⁹⁷ ²⁹⁸ ²⁹⁹ ³⁰⁰ ³⁰¹ ³⁰² ³⁰³ ³⁰⁴ ³⁰⁵ ³⁰⁶ ³⁰⁷ ³⁰⁸ ³⁰⁹ ³¹⁰ ³¹¹ ³¹² ³¹³ ³¹⁴ ³¹⁵ ³¹⁶ ³¹⁷ ³¹⁸ ³¹⁹ ³²⁰ ³²¹ ³²² ³²³ ³²⁴ ³²⁵ ³²⁶ ³²⁷ ³²⁸ ³²⁹ ³³⁰ ³³¹ ³³² ³³³ ³³⁴ ³³⁵ ³³⁶ ³³⁷ ³³⁸ ³³⁹ ³⁴⁰ ³⁴¹ ³⁴² ³⁴³ ³⁴⁴ ³⁴⁵ ³⁴⁶ ³⁴⁷ ³⁴⁸ ³⁴⁹ ³⁵⁰ ³⁵¹ ³⁵² ³⁵³ ³⁵⁴ ³⁵⁵ ³⁵⁶ ³⁵⁷ ³⁵⁸ ³⁵⁹ ³⁶⁰ ³⁶¹ ³⁶² ³⁶³ ³⁶⁴ ³⁶⁵ ³⁶⁶ ³⁶⁷ ³⁶⁸ ³⁶⁹ ³⁷⁰ ³⁷¹ ³⁷² ³⁷³ ³⁷⁴ ³⁷⁵ ³⁷⁶ ³⁷⁷ ³⁷⁸ ³⁷⁹ ³⁸⁰ ³⁸¹ ³⁸² ³⁸³ ³⁸⁴ ³⁸⁵ ³⁸⁶ ³⁸⁷ ³⁸⁸ ³⁸⁹ ³⁹⁰ ³⁹¹ ³⁹² ³⁹³ ³⁹⁴ ³⁹⁵ ³⁹⁶ ³⁹⁷ ³⁹⁸ ³⁹⁹ ⁴⁰⁰ ⁴⁰¹ ⁴⁰² ⁴⁰³ ⁴⁰⁴ ⁴⁰⁵ ⁴⁰⁶ ⁴⁰⁷ ⁴⁰⁸ ⁴⁰⁹ ⁴¹⁰ ⁴¹¹ ⁴¹² ⁴¹³ ⁴¹⁴ ⁴¹⁵ ⁴¹⁶ ⁴¹⁷ ⁴¹⁸ ⁴¹⁹ ⁴²⁰ ⁴²¹ ⁴²² ⁴²³ ⁴²⁴ ⁴²⁵ ⁴²⁶ ⁴²⁷ ⁴²⁸ ⁴²⁹ ⁴³⁰ ⁴³¹ ⁴³² ⁴³³ ⁴³⁴ ⁴³⁵ ⁴³⁶ ⁴³⁷ ⁴³⁸ ⁴³⁹ ⁴⁴⁰ ⁴⁴¹ ⁴⁴² ⁴⁴³ ⁴⁴⁴ ⁴⁴⁵ ⁴⁴⁶ ⁴⁴⁷ ⁴⁴⁸ ⁴⁴⁹ ⁴⁵⁰ ⁴⁵¹ ⁴⁵² ⁴⁵³ ⁴⁵⁴ ⁴⁵⁵ ⁴⁵⁶ ⁴⁵⁷ ⁴⁵⁸ ⁴⁵⁹ ⁴⁶⁰ ⁴⁶¹ ⁴⁶² ⁴⁶³ ⁴⁶⁴ ⁴⁶⁵ ⁴⁶⁶ ⁴⁶

I've seen this in myself and others while trying to help men get a job, a GED, or learn things about Jesus and the Scriptures. They put up a wall like a defense mechanism because they just don't want to be picked on. They allow that fear and pride to trap them in a stagnant place of no growth and a cycle of decline.

11:2, 18:12, 15:33).

 **BRAIN TERSERS:** 1. A man is traveling with his two sheep and a wolf. The man reaches a river with a small boat that can only carry himself and one animal at a time. The wolf will attack the sheep if left alone. How does he get the animals across?
2. What is always in front of you but you can never see it? (answers on page 48)

The billionaire founder of Ford Motor Company, who helped pioneer the automobile, did not attend college.



The idea here is not to just look at these photos, but to enter into them. Lay on your bunk, or sit in the yard, and still your mind. Shhhh. Not a sound. Instead of saying "I wish I could be there," be there. I took each photo over the years of our travels, specifically to share with you. So now, engage the enormous power of your imagination to draw from them. Let them consume you. This is Thought Replacement Therapy.¹⁰⁰ How far can you travel? How many details can you see, feel, touch, smell, and hear? The dirt, the pine needles, the alpine air. Can you sit, stand, and walk through each scene? What kind of thoughts come to your mind? Can you pause all the racing within and think, ponder, pray? What kind of things would you say to God sitting in such a place? What kind of things would He say to you? What kind of things could you resolve about your current issues? Could you pull from there, thoughts to sustain you in here? Here, take my yellow rain jacket, storms come out of nowhere, borrow it for today so you don't get soaked out there. Bon voyage!

Brain Teaser 17: What is lighter than a feather, but even the strongest man on earth will not be able to hold it for more than 10 minutes? 18: What two words, added together, contain the most letters?



Cascades, Washington

Take a deep breath. In... hold... out. Sit on that rock on the right there, it's all yours. Let that sunbeam hit your face. Smell the thick layers of deep pine woven through the air. It almost knocks you out, it's so strong. The breeze is soft through the swaying branches but it's the silence that's actually quite loud. The moss is thick under your feet, like a carpet. This is your place, come here as often as you like; *a moment like a home that you carry inside.*



Bow Lake, Alberta, Canada

You get up just before dawn and get on a bicycle, down the road, up this long hill and down the other side. Whee. A heavy cloud covers the forest in fog. You reach the lake shore just in time. You watch the darkness run and hide as the golden sun bursts over the horizon, lighting up the mountains with all its glory. The clouds reflect its golden essence and the lake reflects theirs as you reflect on it all; *only in stillness is the reflection clear.*



Silverton, Colorado

You're so tired from your hike earlier that the hard ground seems as soft as a mattress (*but quietly wish you would have bought that \$8 pad from Walmart*). As you go to zip the tent, you catch the glimmer of another world. The galaxies are exploding above with divine thoughts of divine glory. You cannot sleep. You wander and wonder... through the pines out to an opening and into the heavens above; *they speak to you like a poet of things only your heart understands.*²¹



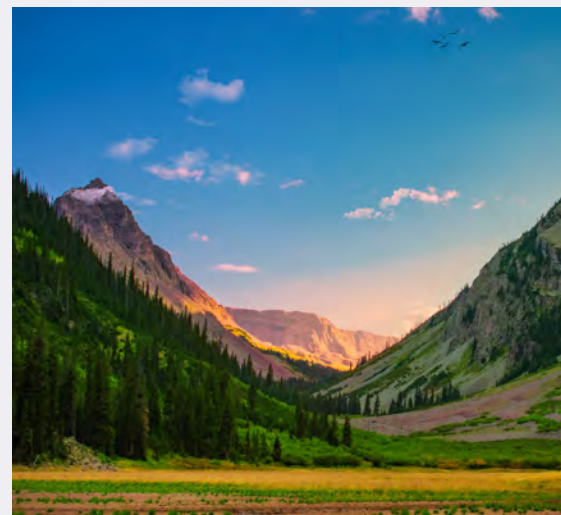
Glacier NP, Montana

Not a soul around. Just you and your thoughts. Can you stand it? *Of course you can. You love it.* Because your mind is now full of new thoughts. You watch the water flowing and hear streams falling. It's fresh and freezing so you take a sip. *Delicious.* You think about John 7 when Jesus was at a big wedding party and told all these people who were drinking that He had *living water* to give them.⁸³ *"Jesus, what does this mean? Really?"*



Cocoa Beach, Florida

Imagine trying to find something that was randomly thrown, somewhere out there, in the sea. Impossible. God says He will grab your sins and throw them into the sea.⁵⁶ Gone. These are the kind of thoughts that fill your mind as you sit here, feet in the cool sand, ocean foam around your ankles, colors of hope reflecting in your eyes... pondering; *the magnitude of His love... like waves washing over you.*



Maroon Bells, Colorado

You can run through this meadow. Go ahead. There is no one around to make you feel dumb. You can even sing "*...The Hills Are Alive With The Sound Of Music.*" You hiked to get here, it's yours to soak in. It's so beautiful, you see a different side of God. You think, *"All this, God made for us to see because it shows us who He is and all the tiny details of His massive glory."*²² From the hilarious chipmunk to the expanse of the heavens.

Brain Teaser 16: I can fly but have no wings. I can cry but I have no eyes. Light is above me and darkness is beneath me. What am I? Answer: A shadow. Pg. 48

JAMAL'S JOURNEY

WRITTEN BY RACHEL REBEKAH

JAMAL WAS HYPNOTIZED BY THE HUM OF THE TRAIN'S STEEL WHEELS AS HE WATCHED THE ENDLESS CORNFIELDS OF NEBRASKA ROLL BY. 'WHAT HAVE I DONE?' HE THOUGHT, 'WHY DID I LEAVE BEHIND EVERYTHING I KNOW?! WHAT IN THE WORLD LIES AHEAD?' JAMAL WAS HEADED WEST.

Jamal had made what he hoped would be a life-changing decision. He decided to face his fear of the unknown and took a job at a horse ranch far from all familiarity and comfort. Jamal would work with inmates at the adjacent correctional facility to train wild mustangs. He didn't know what was missing in his life and, despite feeling nervous and inadequate, he had a hope he might find something here. He arrived late, after four days on the train, and before he knew it, Jamal was throwing his bag into the bottom bed of a bunk, just in time for lights out at the ranch. Nodin was the tall, Native American, ranch foreman. He told Jamal that he better get to sleep quickly, *"The mustangs will be here first thing in the morning."* Not exactly a calming thought. But exhaustion took over, and in a blink, Jamal was shaken awake. *"The horses are here!"*

He jumped up and pulled on his boots. Grabbing his hat, Jamal joined the commotion outside. Two huge semi-trucks and a bus pulled up simultaneously. The bus unloaded twelve guys from the prison, and they were hootin' and hollerin' with excitement as they rushed out. One guy was barking out orders and made it clear who was leading these men.

Half of them were directed to open the corral, and the other half to open the trucks. Some thirty wild mustangs bolted straight into the corral. They were bucking, snorting, and racing together in circles, trying to find a way out. Jamal was fascinated and more than a bit terrified. He wasn't sure he could get past his fear to tackle theirs. It was over an hour before the horses tired and settled down some. The group separated naturally into two herds led by two stallions.

Nodin (*Wind in Ojibwe*) called Jamal (*Arabic: beauty, grace*) over to meet Grit (*strength of character*), the guy who had been directing the ranch hands from the correctional facility. Grit was a big, tough-looking inmate and very intimidating. He was to be Jamal's trainer. He had been with the program for over four years, and Nodin said Grit was the best he'd ever seen.

Nodin wanted Jamal to start learning the ropes right away, so while the other guys were left to the feeding and watering tasks, Grit and Jamal went to survey the new horses. Despite feeling inadequate, Jamal appreciated the direct, confident way Grit spoke. He didn't make him feel stupid, but explained that unless they could gentle the horses for adoption, they would have to be put down. So he took his work very seriously. The first step would be getting them

to adapt to their surroundings and to being around humans. It would take a lot of time and patience. It was also quite dangerous. Tales of broken bones and concussions didn't do much to quell Jamal's fear. Grit said the stallions would be their primary focus because their behavior would influence the rest of the herd. *"Transform the leader, and you could save the herd,"* Grit said.

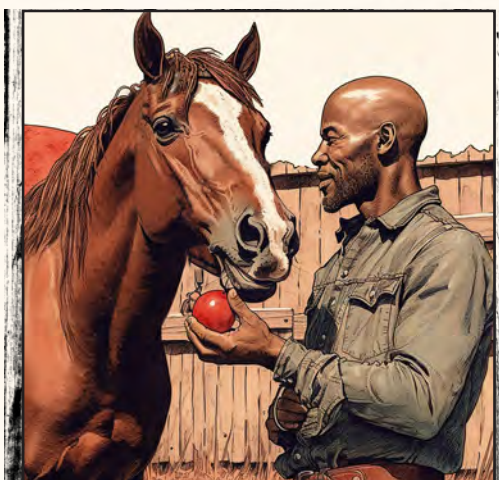
For the next two weeks, Nodin, Jamal, and all the hands worked tirelessly, sunrise to sunset, speaking softly to the horses and caring for them. At first, they kept the mustang herd together. But one morning, Grit said it was time to move one of the stallions into a nearby pen. The stallion was snorting and tossing his head and, in the process, one of the hands got kicked and ended up with cracked ribs. That stallion was fierce. Grit slowly kept backing him into the pen. As soon as the horse was in, Nodin shut the gate. Grit got out quickly as the stallion reared up and charged the fence. Jamal couldn't imagine ever getting past all the anger and fear he saw in that horse's eyes to actually touch him. Improbable, if not impossible.

Grit told Jamal to set some hay, a couple of apples, a blanket, and a bridle inside the pen. He and Grit then sat on the rail and watched the stallion. Wild and macho. Brave and angry. Scared and alone. *"How about you name this one?"*

Jamal looked at Grit in amazement. Quite the privilege to give a rookie. Jamal took a deep breath, smelling sage and rain on the mountain wind. Felt like he was light years away from his past. Nothing familiar. Not knowing whom to trust or how to be. And Jamal saw himself in the horse's eyes. 'We both landed on another planet, didn't we, dude?' he thought, 'Now we gotta figure out what we're gonna do about it.' *"Let's call him Apollo,"* he said. *"He's a rocket with all that power!"* Something on Grit's face, as he nodded, told Jamal that he got it and could relate, but he didn't elaborate.

Day after day, they went through this routine. Apollo was snorting, pawing, and charging while they watched, just being there. Each day, Apollo would come a little closer, eyeing the men and the apples.

Finally, Grit told Jamal to hold an apple out the next time Apollo got close. *"Just let him come to you, talk to him, tell him it's all gonna be okay..."* Time froze as Jamal calmed his racing heart and held out his hand. *"C'mon, bro, we can do this together, I got you..."* he murmured to Apollo. One step. Two. With another half step and a brush of his nose across Jamal's palm, Apollo ate the apple from his hand. Jamal couldn't stop his smile from bursting ear to ear. At that moment, a weight lifted from his shoulders. *"We're gonna make it ain't we, buddy?"* Over the weeks, Jamal, Grit, and Apollo worked together. Jamal marveled every time he got to touch that wild mustang. He was



astounded when Apollo would lean into his hand or nuzzle his hair. The look in Apollo's eye went from fear to deep affection. He found a kindred spirit in that horse. Jamal discovered a contentment he hadn't known before.

Jamal loved interacting with the other ranch hands. He related to their rough and tumble ways. There was this one dude, though, who always seemed to be picking a fight with someone. One day at lunch, a scuffle broke out between him and one of the others. Jamal got concerned because it was escalating quickly and getting intense. Everyone was holding their breath, watching things unfold, when Grit walked over and got in the middle of them. He put a gentle hand on each of their shoulders and told them it was going to be all right, *"You're bros, man. You're both right, and you're both wrong! You're bigger than this. Come on."* Jamal was moved and intrigued by seeing how Grit diffused the situation. He'd calmed the men, just like he calmed the horses.

One evening as the sun was setting over the Rockies after all the work was done, Jamal asked Grit, *"How could you possibly know that Apollo would change? It seemed impossible. How? It's like you knew that wild stallion personally."* Grit answered, *"I do. He is me. Or... he's who I was."* Grit leaned against the pen and looked off into the mountains as he told Jamal he had been in prison a long time. *"When I first got here, I spent more time in the hole than out of it. I was so angry, I lashed out at everyone. No one could tell me anything. I was nothin', so I just didn't care. I was abandoned by everyone I knew."*



Everything was strange. Nothin' was mine. No one understood. Maybe fighting and getting in trouble was a way to get noticed. I don't know. Hate was the poison I was drinking, thinking someone else would die from it. But, I was the one dying." Grit just shook his head, seeing into the past.

Dusk turned the mountains into silhouettes as the first stars came out. Grit continued, "Nodin had put up a poster about needing volunteers to train wild mustangs. I figured I had nothing to lose. I felt like I had a wild mustang inside me and that nobody was going to do anything about it unless I did something. I was alone. It was up to me. Things worked out so I could join the ranch crew: Nodin had me sit on the rail of this same pen, and watch another stallion. He asked me to name it, and I picked Rebel. Somehow, just seeing the wildness in that mustang, everything inside me started to make sense. I could relate to the anger and unfamiliarity he felt, taken from his freedom, with strangers in a new environment. I saw myself. And in understanding Rebel's fear and frustration, well, it brought something out of me that I didn't know was there."

"So, I was as shocked as you to see that wild horse respond to kindness, after Nodin taught me how. I learned that to make a connection, you have to be willing to give of yourself." Grit chuckled softly, "As dumb as this sounds, for the first time

I began to see that there was more to life than me. I started thinking. I mean really different thoughts about something other than myself. I was changing from the inside out. It started with gentling wild mustangs, but then I wondered 'Could I maybe help men heal in the same way?' It dawned on me that I could use the knowledge of all my hard-core rebellion to reach the "wild mustangs" that nobody else could reach. Maybe I could pull a guy back so that he didn't have to go through all that I did."

Jamal walked with Grit to the bus, where Nodin and the others were joking around. He was so glad he would see them all tomorrow. As the bus pulled away, Nodin laid a hand on Jamal's shoulder. "That was good work with Apollo," he said, smiling, "and with Grit. You guys make a good team."

Darkness fell upon the ranch, transforming the sky into a phenomenal display of twinkling lights like Jamal had never seen before. It meant a lot to him for Grit to open up like that. Jamal knew that he had made the right choice coming out here. He was discovering that he was someone he'd never imagined he could become. As he walked back to his bunk, under that star-filled sky, Jamal reflected on the depths to which you can go to actually make a difference.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are currently over 85,000 wild mustangs roaming the west. The land cannot sustain so many horses, so the BLM works, in conjunction with correctional facilities in over eleven states, to round them up and provide training to inmates in veterinarian skills, animal husbandry, and conditioning of these mustangs so that they can be adopted by the public. Everyone wins.

TOTAL ECLIPSE BY SARAH JOY

Crazy story here. I once got a gig teaching a horse in Las Vegas. It worked with Wayne Newton at Caesar's and needed help getting a promotion. Just kidding. But fact is stranger than fiction, 'cuz the crazy part of my true story is that this horse thought he was a dog. Not kidding. Eclipse had spent the first 4 years of his life living in a backyard, with other dogs. The owner now wanted a real horse, that did horse stuff, to enter in horse shows. So he hired me: a human to teach a horse that thought it was a dog to be a horse again. No easy gig. 3 months in and it was, understandably, not going so great.

Every day, along with the other dogs, Eclipse would amble over, tongue hanging out, and beg for treats. But the moment it was time to do horse stuff, ya know, like running? Nope. I'd ask him to gallop, but he'd just kick out his back legs, do a weird little shuffle, and return to plodding. It was like he didn't know what his legs were even for, besides taking him closer to food. A dog show would be the only "show" for him. Maybe as a new breed of 'Labrahorse'? Yeah, I trained him to be ridden. I could even get him to trot. But Eclipse just wouldn't run. And it made me so sad. How could a horse go his whole life and never do what he was born to do?

One late September night, I pulled the horse trailer into the rodeo event center behind Sam's Town Casino. I was too tired to ride, so I turned Eclipse out into the massive arena to stretch his legs. He ambled off into the darkness, snuffling along the sand looking for stray alfalfa to eat. I took a deep breath of that desert night air, inhaling the aroma of horses, hay, and leather. Nothing better. A warm breeze brushed my face. All of a sudden, I heard galloping hooves. Dust was rising on the far end of the arena. Under the light of the full moon, a dark horse was racing towards me.

Just like in the movie 'The Black Stallion', his nostrils were flared, with his mane and tail flying straight out. Within inches of the fence, he reared up and tossed his mane. In a flash, he was galloping around the arena again. Eclipse??? Running!?! I was blown away. He was so...beautiful...regal. It was as if something on the wind had just shown him what his legs were for. That night he ran and ran and ran. To me, it was even better than seeing a wild horse run. For them, there was never any doubt what they were made to do. But Eclipse had to wake up something inside him that had been dormant too long. And, boy, did he ever. Few things I've seen since were as beautiful as watching that horse on that night in the desert under the stars.



Brain Teaser 12: What building in the world has the most stories? Answer: Pg. 48

BARN SOUR



Barn Sour is a term used by horsemen to describe a horse that always wants to return to the barn and presents resistance or complete refusal if you try to ride him away from his comfort area. This is usually because the horse was abused or improperly trained.

When many men are released from prison, it's like letting the reins loose on a barn sour horse. They immediately flee back to the "barn" of familiarity and comfort of wherever they came from. Of course, this is very understandable, as we all seek for comfort.

The problem is, often the place, people, and familiarity, can cause us to fall back into a dead-end mode. People expect you to be a certain way, so it's easy to reassume the habits of being who you were. But, in a world of 8 billion people, 190 countries, hundreds and thousands of cities and towns, are you going to let one place, one town, one group of people, define your entire life? Because... why? They know your name? Some natural relation? Brother, don't be barn sour. Don't limit the capacity of your life or location because of fear or familiarity. Consider moving or traveling. It's not as hard as you think. Rise to a new challenge.



AGAINST ALL ODDS

The horse was rejected and sold cheap. The jockey had never won a stakes race. The trainer had already lost it all.

In 2016, lightning struck the barn at Eric Reed's ranch and started a fire that killed 23 of the passionate trainer's horses. "There was this crazy roar and then the scream of the horses was just something that nobody should have to hear," Reed said. He was devastated.

Years later in 2022, he bought a cheap claims horse, a horse that kept losing. Yet Reed saw something in him and wanted to run him in the Kentucky derby. But it was full. No chance. He texted his dad that morning, "Not gonna happen." 30 seconds before the deadline closed, Reed got a call. For some reason, a top horse had just withdrawn from the race. "...I'll never forget those words, 'do you want to race in the Kentucky Derby?'" Reed said, "I couldn't speak. I couldn't breathe. Finally, I just gasped out... Yes!"

81-1 odds. In the 3-hour pre-race broadcast, the announcers did not even mention the horse's name...until half a second before Rich Strike crossed the finish line... FIRST. That is the true story of one of the greatest upsets in the history of the Kentucky Derby. It could not happen. It should not have happened. But... it did.

My friend, you may feel like your barns have burned down, your horse is a loser, or you don't even have a horse or a spot in the race. But that don't mean you can't make a comeback and still win it all.

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Chess House started with a box of books to learn the game. It was a hobby for my brothers and I as '90s teens. We loved chess and people.

Today it's the most trusted online source for unique chess sets throughout the world. It reaches every part of the globe – people playing games or organizing events; artists, professionals, educators... the list is endless.

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I'd love to help you find your ideal chess set, like our low-cost vinyl chess board that rolls up (pictured right). See ChessHouse.com/DeepHeart for info. Just be sure to talk to your administration about what is allowed in your facility before ordering.

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I serve you, brothers and sisters, by enabling the gift of chess sets through Ruth with Deep Heart, to give in their shows as they travel and perform at various facilities, where and when they are allowed. It's treasured for play and positive interaction.



*"Society wins
through better
choices. Better
choices are
trained in
chess."*

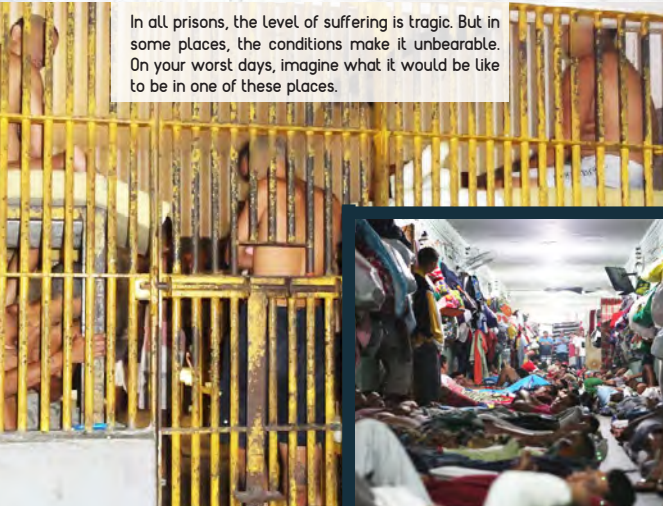
The language of chess flows across barriers, a neutral place to experience order, to adventure in bounds of predictability. It's a place to face another, share a mutual respect, to grasp a handshake, let go of something, and to train the mind on positive patterns of thought.

Society wins when people make better choices. On the chessboard, move by move, they are practiced and the spirit is lifted.

Persevere... The chess piece is carved from 3500-year-old Cypress tree wood. That means it was merely a sapling when Moses led Israel out of Egypt. It was to one day rise a knight. Story at ChessHouse.com/SenatorTree



In all prisons, the level of suffering is tragic. But in some places, the conditions make it unbearable. On your worst days, imagine what it would be like to be in one of these places.

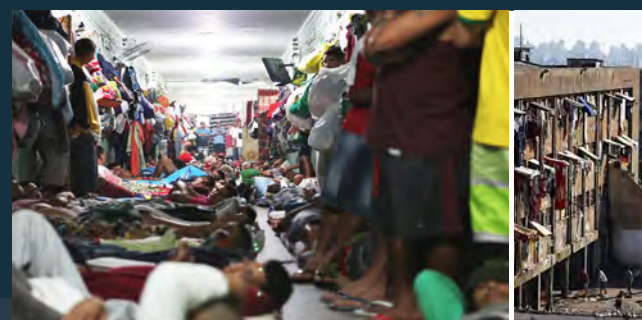


BANGU

In one prison, the guys from the general population told me they had gone a month without being allowed outside or seeing the sun.



BRAZIL



Above: This prison we visit is so overcrowded, men are seen standing, waiting for their turn to sleep.



RECIFE, PERNAMBUCO



JUAREZ, MEXICO

The photo (above left) shows the inside of a cell shared by 12-15 men in Brazil. At night, to get to the toilet, they often have to directly step on the men sleeping on the floor and have had to learn that this is just a part of daily life because there is no other option in the pitch dark.

About two weeks after we visited a facility in Mexico, it made world news that the same prison was attacked from the outside by a gang. Many inmates and guards were killed. Individuals we had personally met. We were deeply impacted by the weight of such tragedy. How quickly life can end. Surely, we must seize today.

FOUR THOUSAND MILES

BY ABRAHAM PAUL

In Rio De Janeiro, they have a phone app that alerts you when there are shootings on the streets. Every day we were there, my phone did not stop buzzing with alerts. There are over 4,500 shootings a year in Rio, creating a war zone in the favelas and leaving the prisons full of wounded men. I wanted to weep as I looked out at the prison soccer court, full of men limping, in medical wraps, blind, and torn apart by bullets, some still lodged in their bodies. *These are my brothers. I love these guys. How can this be?* We started that tour by spending 5 days there in Bangu, a notorious prison complex composed of 17 separate prison facilities. Then, on May 1st, 2022, we decided to head 1500 miles north to a remote city called Recife. Their Secretary of State had asked if we would come and work in ten of their worst prisons. Conditions were unimaginable. *Growing up, I could have never imagined I'd find myself in a remote prison surrounded by a Brazilian jungle.*

Toward the end of our stay in Recife, we were caught in a once-in-a-century typhoon. Howling winds and torrential rains hammered the coastal city, with catastrophic floods and landslides unlike any in the past 60 years. It was an official state of emergency.

Our last presentation there, in a women's facility, had to be postponed. The clogged drains and concrete walls trapped about two feet of water throughout the whole prison. Rats and garbage floated everywhere. The women had to huddle on top of their concrete beds to try and stay dry. An already horrible situation became even worse.

Tacumbú is one of the worst prisons in the world. Built for 800, now holding 4,000. 75% don't have a conviction. Approximately 18 people are killed there every year. Many sleep outside on the floor.



PARAGUAY



CHILE



RIO DE JANEIRO

Doing the native, cultural dance of Capoeira with the men in Rio De Janeiro. The Berimbau, an instrument made of a stick, wire, and dried squash, is seen on the left.

A man named Antonio recently wrote us detailing how cockroaches cover the floor of their cells, and they have to scare them away to find a spot to sleep. One of the first nights he was there, he felt something fall on his face, a roach. It was a big deal then. Now, he has learned it's just going to happen throughout the night. He said he's actually grateful when it's not a rat.

While performing on the streets, we shared with the crowd the power and necessity of forgiving our enemies. A man came up afterward, and said in tears, "Today, you saved my life." He explained that he'd actually been on his way to kill his wife, who had stolen all his money. He was planning on going to prison. That moment, he changed his mind and forgave her. We talked for an hour about all involved.

It was New Year's Eve in Rio, and we were sharing the gospel on the streets at one of the largest celebrations in the world. A man came running up to me and gave me a huge hug, smiling ear to ear. He said, "You came to visit me, 3 years ago. I saw you in prison." He remembered every detail of our show. He said "Look, I'm working. I'm not going back to my old ways. I listened to you guys and God is helping me." He gestured to giant bags of snacks he was selling on the street.



Miraculously, as an answer to prayer, the rain stopped for a day. The water receded just enough that we could still perform for the ladies. *Brother, or sister, you can't imagine how bad this place was. It made me sick, both emotionally and physically (as we all caught a Brazilian flu).*

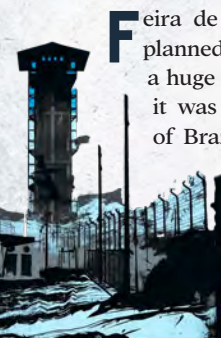
Everything and everyone was soaked. There was a horrible odor in the air and trash was piled everywhere. They had basically no staff and it was extremely overcrowded. Only Jesus can mediate such suffering. We cried with them, laughed with them, and poured out all the love we could, before having to hit the road the same day. Otherwise, we would've been trapped there for weeks as the next storm front was moving in.

Trying to find a road out of the city was like following a complex maze. I would stop, get out, and walk ahead. If the water came over my



knees, I knew it was too high and I had to go back and find another road. After a few hours, we found the best chance and gunned it. We made it out, but now we were in uncharted territory. I had not made any plans to go this way. The good roads, that we arrived on, were out of the question. The landslides washed the bridges away. We were forced to take a winding, single-lane, broken-up road through the mountainous jungle. The first night we pulled off at some dive, hole-in-the-wall hotel. Six bars playing music at full volume makes quite a medley, add in about 15 dogs barking non-stop and you have a Brazilian orchestra. I didn't sleep a wink, but at least we were dry, which is more than I could say for so many of our brothers and sisters we'd just left. We woke early to get our brakes and steering linkage fixed since they'd been damaged by the flood. Then we were off to the next city.

KEEP IT REAL, DAWG.



Feira de Santana was not a city I had planned to visit, but we heard they had a huge prison. Afterward, we found out it was the most dangerous city in all of Brazil. Due to the increased crime, their prison was heavily overpopulated. (20 men were forced to share a cell that was built with 6 beds. They took shifts just for the chance to lay down and sleep.)

So we walked up to a massive 30' steel gate and knocked on the door asking to speak to the warden. Apparently, their current warden was caught in severe corruption. The central office that was 4 hours away was sending a new warden that same afternoon. We were told that if we were to wait, there'd be a chance he would speak to us and, maybe, even allow us to perform for the men inside. That same day, he arrived late but was favorable. He'd heard of our work throughout Brazil, so he invited us in.

A team of heavily-armed security guards escorted us and our musical equipment to the entrance of a large concrete patio with about 300 men inside. The walls were covered in mold and mildew from the broken sewage pipes and the smell, yet again, was overwhelming. The guards informed us that we were on our own from that point on. Guards are not allowed into the patios to avoid conflict. This is common in Brazil and we were used to it.

We got permission from the leader of that patio and he organized the men

as we set up. These were mostly ex-gang and drug dealers, covered in tattoos, averaging about 6'4", and very muscular. But there was a weird vibe and attitude in the air. When we walked in, all the men were trying to appear nice and act acceptable. It seemed so awkward and forced. Have you ever seen a bull dog wearing a suit and tie? I haven't but that's what came to my mind. Just ain't natural.

So, I just spoke to this and explained that *"Growing up we all long for an identity, right? Some grow up moving between different homes or on the streets. You're forced to learn the ways and hierarchy of the gang world. Dog eat dog. You got the big main 'bad dawg' and then his pack of dawgs that hang with him, and then there's you, trying to earn your way up the food chain. You learn what to say and not to say, how to act, and what to do. Bark louder and look meaner. You 'put on' the tough guy, as if it were a garment, to be accepted. It's not who you are, but it's a role you play, like an actor, hoping to fool those around you and, maybe someday, even fool yourself. Once you get to prison, you see in retrospect that it didn't work out as you had hoped."*

While stuck behind bars, you're hit over the head with the whole idea of 'reform, reform, reform,' which is often linked to some sort of religion. So, reluctantly, you take off the jacket of the bad dawg and put on the 'suit and tie' of a "religious image." Once again, you're forced to learn how their system works. You're told what you can and can't do, think or say. If you want to be accepted, you have to play by their rules. Eventually you assume a false image that isn't the reality of who you are and that's not what God wants for you."

When I said this, I feared they'd be offended, which was not my intent. But instead, there was an immediate release of tension and their response was nothing but gratitude. I could hear a loud... silent, "phew." They were sick and tired of being obligated to be someone they were not. My friend, the last thing in the



world that God wants is for you to fake it. He wants you to know and be secure in His love for you. Jesus came to deal with us in the reality of what we are and not a fake image. He wants you to take off the "put-on".^{53/74} He knows the bulldog that we all are, so you don't have to hide it. Your tattoos and gruff-looking image can be a powerful tool to reach others for Him. Those men were happy to "rip off the suit" and bark a little. Woof. Woof.

The sun was getting low on the horizon, as an ocean breeze blew across our faces. We played trance, rock, and hip-hop music during our performance and confirmed to them we are truly not religious (at all). My brother and I did a comedy sketch where I actually act like a dog. If that sounds embarrassing, it was. But it was worth it to make them laugh so hard.

Later on, we talked heart-to-heart with them and I heard some of their stories. I learned that these were some real cool dawgs, facing down this terrible world with tremendous courage. It was beautiful to all just be real. For those hours we became like a family. It's only when we lose the image and pretense that real change can happen.

We went on to have more adventures than I could tell you. 4000 miles and 27 prisons later, we finished that tour. I'll never be the same as I remember the thousands of beautiful faces of those overcoming such horrific conditions.



THE MERCY ON THE MOUNTAIN

Latitude 34°13'21.4"N Longitude 117°35'06.7"W

BY MERCY RUTH

I don't know how long I lay unconscious on the mountain. When I came to, the first thing I remember was seeing the contrast of so much deep-red blood on the glimmering white snow. 'An animal must have died,' I thought, 'I wonder where it is?' As my brain slowly came out of the fog, it dawned on me, *that was my blood, coming from a huge gash on my head. 'What happened to me?'* My next memory is hearing the rotary blades of helicopters slicing the air overhead. Then I realized they were looking ... for me.

In December, we traveled to the Los Angeles area to work in correctional facilities and help the homeless on Skid Row.

The campground we were staying at was surrounded by the beautiful San Gabriel Mountains and, on Christmas Eve morning, I decided to go for a hike. I rose at 5:30 am, laced up my boots, grabbed my backpack, and headed out. I planned to be back by noon to watch the Cowboys' game with my family. Plus, my mom was making cookies and the window to steal cookie dough was short.

I rode my bike 3 miles and locked it at the trailhead. The sun was just beginning to peak over the distant ridge, chasing away the stars and splashing the sky pink. It was a spectacular day and within the first hour I was down to a T-shirt. I filled my lungs with the intoxicating aroma of pine as the trail wove through a rich forest and across two streams. I cherish being alone with God. When I hike or run, I pray for so many people I meet that are suffering in prisons around the world. *I pray for you there, my friend, and ask God to send you grace.*

I love listening to the silence. It speaks to me of many things. At other times, I enjoy music as the right song drops a soundtrack to this magnificent "movie" playing around me. When I get to a good Celtic song, it's me... the female Braveheart, running on the peaks... well, you know... in my head.

As I got higher, snow started to cover the trees adding a special magic to the morning. Also, a certain squirrel may have come face to face

with a snowball. Poor sucker. Then came the final ascent. Ah. The summit! I savored the moment and took it all in. A 360 majestic view! Surrounded by so much glory, it was as if the very wind was shouting "God is so close."

I downed a protein bar and started the descent. I came to a part where it had become very slippery. Taking out my walking sticks, I began to really focus and double down on my footing. This, my brother or sister, is my last memory before I slipped on ice and was knocked unconscious by the fall.

I WOKE UP WITH NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED. MY LEG WAS JAMMED INTO A DEAD TREE THAT HAD STOPPED MY FALL BUT BATTERED MY BODY. A HIKER WHO CAME BEHIND TOLD ME I HAD FALLEN OVER 200 FT AND HE'D CALLED IN A RESCUE.

My first thought was that there was no way I needed a helicopter! But when I saw all the blood, I realized I was seriously injured and in a very bad situation. I moved a little, and excruciating pain shot through my body, especially my neck.

Walking With A Broken Neck.

It took two hours for the helicopters to find me, and two more for them to get close, due to the strong updraft winds. A military rescuer repelled down and came to my side. *"I hate to tell you this, honey, but the helicopter can't drop the cable here. We have to walk to another place to be evacuated,"* he said.

I just begged God: "Please, have mercy on me, Jesus. Help me." Brother, He met me in the moment. Despite the searing pain, I got up.

Holding my neck, I hiked across the mountain to the rescue spot. It was grueling. I did not know it at the time, but *my neck was broken.*

We made it to the clearing and the rescuer held me as the cable lifted us off the mountain. The wind whipped away the hat that was used as my bandage and the severed skin blew open, exposing my skull. As a daughter of the Most High, I remember thinking as we swung above the peaks, *'something significant is going to come out of this.'*¹⁰⁶

Finally, the team in the chopper pulled us inside. The sheriff called my father and told him the devastating news. *Knowing the grief and shock that was hitting my family killed me. It hurt worse than my physical pain.*

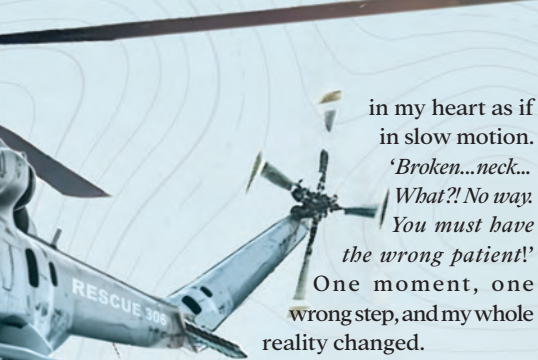
They transported me to the trauma center at the nearest hospital. The gash in my head required 40 stitches and staples to close. I had bitten a hole through my lip and had cuts all over my face and in my mouth. There was so much blood in my hair, it turned red and took days to wash out.

I thought gritting through all those stitches was the worst of it. I told myself that the pain in my neck was just from whiplash. *'I'll still be home for Christmas and things will be OK.'* But then the doctor walked in after reading the MRI scan and hit me with devastating reality. He sharply told the nurses to stop moving me. I had broken three vertebrae in my neck. *A wrong movement in a certain way and I could be paralyzed.* Those words whirled in my head then landed

The chopper was nearly out of fuel and this attempt was the last.

A 1 5/8" screw, a 1 3/16" steel plate & two 3/4" screws.





in my heart as if
in slow motion.
'Broken...neck...
What?! No way.
You must have
the wrong patient!'
One moment, one
wrong step, and my whole
reality changed.

As bleak as this situation seemed, I clung to the reality that God is a GOOD Father. He would show me a strategy to deal with this tragedy. He would give me a plan through my pain.

The surgery required to repair my spine would be high-risk and complicated. It was a terrifying moment when the neurosurgeon explained that he would enter through the front of my neck, move aside my vocal cords, and insert screws and a plate in the broken vertebrae.

I lay in the ICU in severe pain. I could not budge or eat for 6 days and was so grateful when they let me have a cup of ice. When they came to get me to go into surgery, I was writing a note to my family, "I love you. I'm so sorry", thinking 'This could be the last text I send'. It was a solemn moment.

Hours later, when I came out of the operating room, my family told me that I smiled and made a heart with my hands. "Did it go ok?" I mumbled. They said the surgeon was ecstatic that the cutting-edge surgery, the first he had performed of this type, went flawlessly.

A few days after, the nurse helped me take my first steps. I realized I had also torn ligaments in my leg, but that pain was swallowed up by the deep joy of realizing I made it. I could *feel* my legs. I was not paralyzed. I was alive!

Solutions To The Unbearable

That was one big thought that just kept hitting me with perspective: *I WAS ALIVE!* The head nurse was really sweet. She had been formerly incarcerated for 6 years and we really connected. She told me that a few days after my accident, others had tragically perished near the same treacherous area. As terrible as my situation was... *I could have died.* Not a day goes by where

I do not relish taking a deep breath through my nose. Before surgery, I could not, as the shock had caused the nasal passage to lock up. Amazing how "ordinary" things can become mega-blessings when we shift our perspective.

When my brother came to visit me, he told me he had written to many of you in prison about what happened. He said he received back waves of love and prayer and that some of you even fasted for me. It just brought me to tears. You guys are really special and I deeply thank you. I will never forget what you did for me. Truly, Extraordinary Outcasts.

NBC Nightly News called my survival the 'Miracle on the Mountain'. I call it *Mercy*. Mercy in the moment. *Mercy on that Mountain*. In the midst of this absolute nightmare, God met me there and brought me into His place.

On my neck brace, I took a sharpie and wrote "John 14." Jesus says that HE will come to US and make a "home" WITH us (v23). Brother, this is where I went. A "place" within that turbulent helicopter ride, terrifying hospital stay, the dreaded news from the doctor, intense pain, a fractured spine... in that place, my place, your place, we can find His place. It's real.

HE CAN TURN OUR WORST MOMENTS INTO THE CATALYST FROM WHICH A DEEPER DIMENSION OF LIFE IS BORN.

I'm just telling you what I have, my precious friend, and what you can have, because He loves us the same. Throughout my life, I worked to build this inner place by fellowship and communication with the Father and the Son. Engaging my heart to learn His heart and access His solutions to the unbearable. In this tragedy I gained an even deeper strategy of how to find His place in such physical torment.

Laying in the hospital, the lights, noise, and pain made it impossible to sleep. So, as I watched the rain slide down the window, I would read in John and let those precious promises replace my fear. Trying to sort out all the things I could have, wish I would have, and didn't do, just ends nowhere good and triggers bad dreams. I chose instead to rest in My Father's house and lock all

S.C.A.R.S: Suffering Creates A Resolute Spirit.



that out. No matter how far we fall after that "one wrong step," He is there at the bottom to catch us (Dt.33:27).

My dad calls the scar on my head a "Tiara" because suffering produces character and character is a crown.^{103,105} I am guessing you too might have a scar. So, my fellow outcast, let's wear our scars with honor. Let's use them as specific tools to break down old walls and build a new home in the presence of the Father. ONE day there is better than a thousand anywhere else (Ps.84:1-10). Circumstances may determine *where* we are, but we can never let them determine *who* we are.

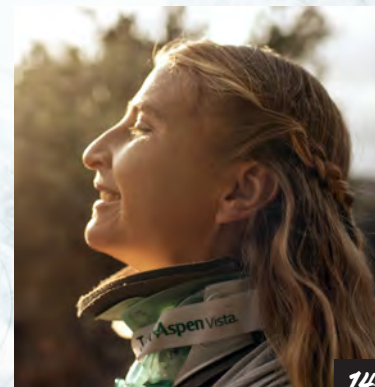
By the way, if you saw our last magazine or video and are wondering if I am the same girl who has a rod in her leg after shattering it, that would be a yes. *Let's just say, I rejoice in the fact that God deliberately chooses broken things.*⁴⁹

To whatever level I end up being able to go for a walk or run again, I'll be out there with the sunrise, praying for you; that on every mountain you face, you would forever find His mercy. I'll never forget the moment the rescue crew hauled me into the helicopter. The pilot looked back at me and smiled as the team cheered, "We got her! She is going to make it." So are you, my brother! So are you!

Rise TO YOUR Fall

and failure, there are constant opportunities where we can choose the positive or negative. Our response determines OUR rise. Imagine a builder who has all the heavy and expensive materials to build a bridge. He could fall under the great burden of the demands and grief of having to do so much work. Instead, he chooses to recognize the positive of already having the materials and begins to build. Build your rise, my brother. You've been through so much. Don't waste your suffering. Turn it over to the Master of tragedy. Let Him use it to help you fashion a deep heart. Instead of hiding our pain, let's use it to reach someone else in theirs. Like the Nazarene, Who showed His scars to reach doubting Thomas. So much can be drawn from affliction if we believe that God will meet us with redemption. Our rise can surpass our fall to such an extent that Paul could actually say, "I take pleasure in weaknesses... in catastrophes..." (2Cor.12:10). "... **THOUGH I FALL I WILL RISE...**" MICAH 7:8

When life is shattered and the pieces scattered, we look back and wonder what really mattered. 'It only took a second to fall apart, now where do I start, to find all the pieces and rebuild my heart?' But, my friend, no matter what happened or where you are, if you are hurting or have gone too far, there is real hope waiting on the other side of the scar. A solution not token, a promise spoken, of a beautiful future found only when you are... Broken.



Sunrise 5:42 AM, Mainly sunny skies High of 75°, Winds SW at 15 to 25 mph



THE WAY BACK HOME

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH

I've been stuck out here in the boondocks with my dad and brother way too long. Can you say boring? I've heard so many cool stories of wild parties, crazy times, and close friends. But not me. Nope. It's all about working the farm every dang day.

I knew it would crush my dad. He was sitting on the porch, breaking open some peanuts. I opened the door, put my hand on his shoulder and whispered, "Hey, Dad. You know that money you said you had saved up to give me one day?" His whole body froze. He dropped the bag of peanuts. Didn't even look up. Before he could say anything I continued, "Can I get it now?" How could I be so hard-hearted? He didn't yell or even argue. He just went to his room and got the money. I felt so cheap. "I see you decided to go on your own. Please be careful, my son. I love you." We both started to cry a bit, so I just picked up my tiny backpack and walked out.

I hitched a ride with many truckers, over many days. I was about a thousand miles from home sitting in my tenth bar. Where's all that fun? All I know is I woke up that morning with a horrible hangover. I had reached into my pockets and was shocked. They were empty! I spent everything my dad gave me over two weeks buying drinks in random bars to impress the ladies. One of 'em ripped me off. I did some very wicked stuff. Now I'm busted inside and out. Flat broke. Well, now I know what the term "loser" means. Too bad being stupid doesn't pay. I'd be rich. I spent the next few weeks shivering at night while sleeping in back alleys. One cool trucker actually gave me a blanket. I walked in and out of so many bars hoping somebody would say, "Hey, buddy. Here's what you were looking for. We all want you as a friend. Here's that wild, fun time you wanted to find." Only good friends I had were the cats screeching at

night. I was desperate and starving, like a dirty bum. Couldn't catch a ride so I started just walking. I came to a farm and begged the owner for work. He walked me out to his barn, looked me in the face, chuckled, and put a shovel in my hand. Pointing to a huge pen of pigs, he laughed, "Here ya go, buddy. Have fun. Shovel them the slop outta the back of that pickup. I'll give ya twenty bucks." It was disgusting. Could barely stand it, but hadn't eaten in 3 days. So I actually fed myself a handful of that pig slop. Couldn't believe it. Kept picturing my dad's face sitting on the porch. I just started talking to him: "Hey, dad. How are you? I was so stupid, dad. I'm so, so sorry. You didn't deserve this." I wonder if he would ever give me another chance?

If I could just talk to him right now, I'd say "Dad, I need you. I was wrong, I can't make it on my own. Can I come back home? I'll work like a slave. I don't deserve to be your son."

SUDDENLY, I CAME TO MY SENSES AND LOGICALLY PROGRESSED THROUGH MY OPTIONS.

I threw the shovel down and started the journey on my way back home. Took me half the time. But now, on the final road to my house, the sun is shining in my face. So I can't make out the figure running out to meet me. Is that my neighbor or brother? As I squint, I see him. Are you kidding me? It's my dad! I had never seen him run before. But now, he *is* running... out to meet me! *Oh, dad, dad.* We embrace. Both of us are weeping. I try to fall to his feet, but he stands me erect and falls to mine. He takes off my smelly shoes and pulls out new ones. Then he replaces my filthy torn shirt and wraps me in this warm, brand-new, leather jacket. He holds me so tight and says, "I've been watching for you every night since you left. I love you, my son. I love you so



much. You have no idea. You mean everything to me. I see the pain of regret in your eyes, but you must know nothing has changed my love for you, my son. All those nights I'd wonder where you were and what you were doing. Now we are here and this is all that matters." I collapse into his arms. All my regret and pain fades. We hug each other tight. Then, ever so slowly, we walk home together, his arm over my shoulder.

That moment meant more than all the time I'd spent running away. It brought me healing that I never thought I could have. I felt so rich inside. It was as if we looked directly into each other's heart. What I saw was that all the contentment I was seeking out in the world, is right here with my father. The beautiful silence said more than a library of words. If I had never run away, would I have ever discovered my father's love?

His love saved my life. It gave me life. It became my life.¹⁹ I found myself in my father's embrace.²⁷

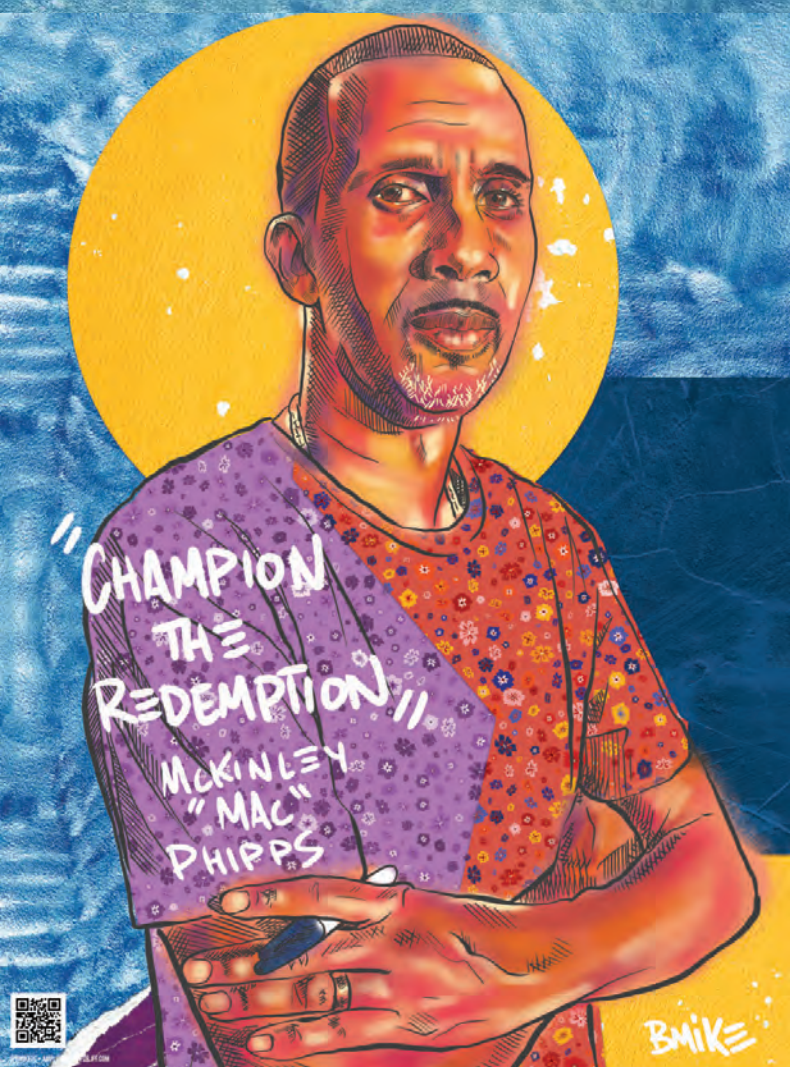


This story is taken from parable written in Luke 15:11-31



To tell you of my suffering, where do I even start?
I am pushing three wheels
on a shopping cart!
This stupid thing keeps getting stuck,
It is just so heavy to lift it over these ruts.
If you watched me from a distance
you'd say I was crazy,
But I walk up and down the street thinking about the
"...maybe".
Maybe I could get my job back, maybe my son would
want to see me again,

but I think and wonder...
"Why? How? Where? And when?"
So when you see me, please know, I am not going
crazy,
It is just that the routine of life doesn't even phase
me.
No need to hide your eyes or cross the street,
Because I am really the kind of guy you'd like to
meet.
Would you ever dare to stop and ask my name?
Because if you did, everything could change.



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"GOD MAKES A HOME FOR THE LONELY... HE IS A FATHER TO THE FATHERLESS. HE LEADS OUT THE PRISONERS INTO PROSPERITY..."

PSALM 68:5-6

"AND BEHOLD, I SEND FORTH THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER UPON YOU TO BE CLOTHED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH."

ACTS 1:8

The Extraordinary Outcasts

— WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PETER —

out-cast

\ 'aūt-kast

A person with social stigma, that is refused acceptance, looked down upon, or ignored.

Stigma: the disapproval of a person based on behavioral characteristics.

Zephaniah 3:19

NO ONE 'BETTER'

The Gettysburg Address is the most quoted speech by the most lauded President in American history. In 272 words, and three minutes, Abraham Lincoln renounced slavery and asserted that America was conceived in 1776 as one nation dedicated to one proposition:

That all men are created equal.

He studied "Elements" of geometric angles in "Euclid's Theory" and concluded that it affirms equality of all men: Things which are all equal to one thing are all equal to each other. Hence, using this paradigm, all men are sinners therefore all men are the same (Gal.3:22). The apostle Paul explicitly teaches: there is no one "better" than another. Neither by race, religion, stature or education. "Are we better than they? Not at all. For we are all under sin" (Rm.3:9). "Call no one teacher... for you are all brothers" (Mt.23:8).

In God's eyes, these who endure prison suffering, irregardless of sin, invoke His wealth of mercy. They live with nothing, face the cruelty of injustice, and by His grace, win each day. Way to go, warriors! We stand for you in applause!

I am not stupid to the evil ways of humanity. But never does the evil in the humanity of a man cancel out that man because of his humanity. We are all criminals to sin." Society pays a D.A. to charge a man, but God alone knows a man's heart. Society demands punishment over mercy, but it is stupid to think you are better than another because you deem it so. 114 million Americans have some kind of criminal record. So, I deeply love my brothers because they face the trauma I know: The world is a sham. It hits you hard. Nobody cares. Nothing to go back to. Time betrays us. Self-glory is a flash. I, too, am an outcast. Been so for many years. I used to bench 405 lbs and run a 4.4 forty. Kick-ass big time. Ruled the bars. A human dance machine (so I thought). Bam. I'm 70 yrs old. Ech. Can barely do my 'taco dance'. My 15 inch 'guns' wilted like seaweed in the sun. But what I built in Christ long ago now thrills me.

You gotta get this, bro. God wants to clear things up so you escape hell. He holds nothing against you. Rather, He holds out His arms for you. Stay with me. No fantasy here. I ain't trying to slay any dragons. Just help you find the way into another "castle".

"FOR I WILL HEAL YOUR WOUNDS BECAUSE THEY CALL YOU AN OUTCAST."

JER. 30:17

Brother, you don't realize God's favor upon you. The basic functions you do each day are God's grace. As you walk about the yard, or cafeteria, you are in an austere survival mode. You are like an eagle or stallion, surviving hostile elements. Peer pressure and anger is an outcome of human combustion. *But God is there with His strength for you.* Just give a bit to His transcendent lift. I've beheld it for 50 yrs. in as many nations. You are beautiful.

So, let's visit this moment like a cool room. Let's walk in. Flip on the lights and fan. Open the shades and windows. Let the light come in. Allow hope to fill our mind space. Leave the "prison-bad" outside. Got to reclaim your moments. We cannot end prison, but we can begin God's compensation for injustice. In times

past, outcasts were "anointed" with an extraordinary power by God. Sometimes, it was signified by a smear or touch of oil or liquid upon a beard or forehead. It empowered ordinary men to rise up and enter heightened existence. In countless stories of suffering, individuals overcame unbearable injustice (Heb.11). They became heirs to a reward of nobility; the inheritance of the Son. *Jesus says the Spirit anointed him to do one thing: 'bring it' to outcasts (Is.61).* Of course, they had to choose.

This may sound nuts, *but you are not a prison-er.* You are an individual that has fallen into a very horrible place. But it is not your identity. It is not your destiny. You are not in storage. You are in transition.

"GOD HAS CHOSEN... THE DESPISED TO SHAME THE WORLD"

1 COR. 1:28

The Father grieves to see you bow your head to the same cruelty His Son also endured under the injustice of men. He commences His grace upon you. God is not a far off 'Cosmic It'. He is a living Father interactive and watching you, calling you into the sonship of the living Jesus.^{19/37}

How many keys can you find hidden throughout the design of this article? Answers on Pg. 48

SON

son-ship

ˈsɒn-ʃɪp

The state, fact, position or relation of being a son. The possession of the relationship of son to a father.

Romans 8:15

THE ORPHAN LEAGUE

In Brazil, military guards, in full battle armor, with weapons and dogs escort me into deep, dark prison blocks. They are stunned as "hardened killers" of vicious gangs, like the Red Command, open up their hearts to us like shattered orphans. *I realize "orphan" is not exactly "badass" verbiage.* But really, it just means someone who has no one who cares. Isolation is a massive pain. It is the orphan-wound bleeding in all mankind.

The world lures us in, breaks us, then rejects us for being broken. We are crushed and left with an open wound. So let's start here, brother. Can we be sincere? Cuz this is where we admit our pain, despair, and crazy stuff to God. It is our touch point to REAL. It is where we either choose God or become extinct. This is the crossroads of your journey. I've met many old men who remain little boys. They just refuse this moment of coming to their senses. God promises to intersect our path with His extraordinary offer of sonship. Now is your golden moment for this destiny.

I was living in close quarters with 100 guys and had to redefine my isolation as solitude in which I forced my mind into a *God-awareness*. This is why Scriptures are crucial because God is in them to inject His divine power into us. Scripture reveals how Jesus walked down dusty roads, alongside prostitutes, drunks, crazy people and into prison. Of all things He could have been saying He chose "I will not leave you as orphans" (Jn.14:18-24). Say what? What did He know about all the talking voices in the market places that they did not even know about themselves?

It is this: whether people have loving parents or savage guardians, whether our early days were stolen dreams or a runaway's saga, inside each individual heart is the desperate need to belong.¹⁵ Jesus says if you ask Me for My Spirit, I will not give you a snake or scorpion (Luke.11:11-13). He's not playing games. The

freedom you crave, my brother, is not essentially from prison, but from yourself, into a higher state. Your spirit is groaning to be reconciled from a rebel into a son. Maybe you, like me, never heard a father's love and counsel. I had to push beyond my awkward sense of mental resistance to the idea of an unseen Presence. Could I dare utter, even a sigh, "*Father, oh, Father. Please, help me?*" This simple groan is the ultimate breakthrough to become a son. It is the epic endowment of adoption and belonging. So grand, the Scriptures document it as what Jesus cried on the cross, "Abba. Father".^{15/37} Imagine: God, the Father, there, with you.

THE FATHER SAYS TO YOU "IT'S OK, MY PRINCE. I LOVE YOU. WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT THROUGH THIS. TALK TO ME. TRUST ME. LET IT GO."

THE WIND

Have you ever stood with your face in the wind? Not for a casual moment. But one day, when you're out walking in the yard, a gentle breeze or storm arises. Your chance. Muster up all your bravado. Double down. Position yourself alone. I dare you. Stare into the wind and "see" God. Believe with everything you got. "Father. Give me Your Son." Hear His significant intelligence for your life. Mount up with the Eagle's wings - Jn.3:8 + Is.40:31. Begin AGAIN. What you're trying to do here, bro, is release your spirit to God. Command your heart. "BELIEVE GOD!" No. It's not pretend. It's the edge of the world. It's fighting with God for your life like Jacob, Peter, Paul, Michael. Your own heart of unbelief is in the way. Maybe it won't happen the 1st or 2nd try. But don't give up or be phony. Keep it real. When you show up, with all your real, God will do the same.

A SON IS BORN

Have you ever tried to really care for a 'damaged' brother? I mean, think about it, bro. YOU can stop suicide and death, dead in its tracks. Just one hand, like yours, on a shoulder.²⁰ Passionate words can silence the frenzy of a 1000 fears. It is the thrill of life to bring a brother "back." Thousands of guys hammered by mental torment of gruesome memories that far-remove them from the here and now. Not their fault. Wrong place. Wrong time. So many who had no parents or abused by their parents. You know what I'm saying; one foster home to another, or a home implosion of drugs, alcohol, prostitution, violence, etc. Scriptures say God will become a crown to those who hold back others from slaughter (Is.28:5, Pr.24:11, Micah.4:7, 2.Tim.4:8, Is.62:3).

As I sit with my fellow outcasts, I know so well how they are hurting for love. It's the name of the game called HUMAN. Just like me. We're all the same. I know what it feels like when you can't stop the pain. All day hidden tears fall like the rain. Brother, Jesus hears your silent screams

Continued on next page...



A CROWN AWAITS THE OUTCAST

"The Spirit of the Lord God... has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners." Isaiah 61:1

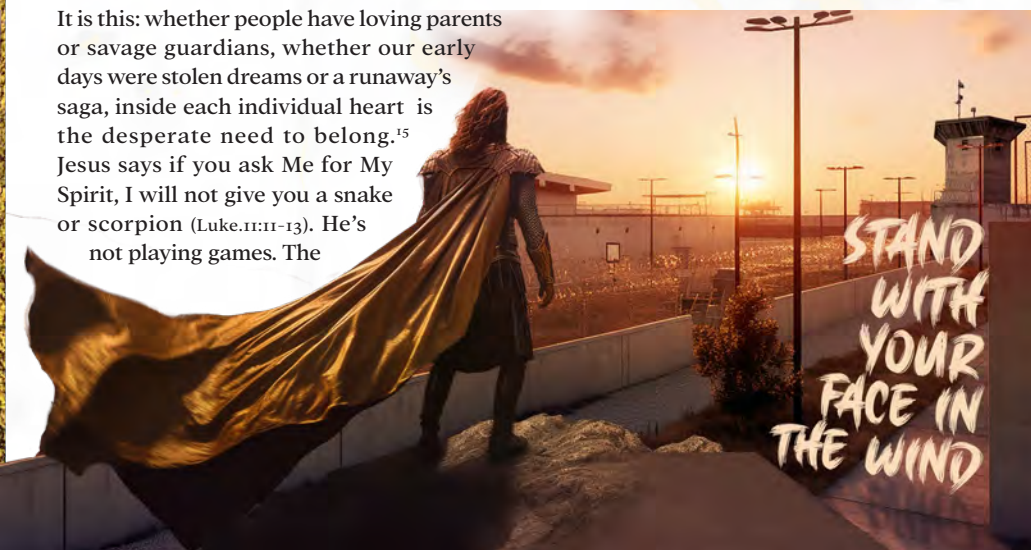
A brother once told Elizabeth how his foster parents drove him to a distant highway, when he was little, and made him get out. Never saw them again. Crushing. Such pain is why the Lion of Judah crowns the outcast with His Love.¹⁰⁵

According to the latest data, there are 437,500 children in America's foster care system who face a disproportionate risk of being incarcerated. The problem is so severe that one quarter of foster care 'alumni' will become involved with the criminal justice system within two years of leaving care.

Jesus bore the greatest scar of an Orphan. The Father had to abandon His Son to sin.^{120/5} Jesus was ripped in pain: hung alone in agony. Scriptures foretold of a coming SON who would govern sons and daughters (Isaiah 9:6).

But when Jesus came to earth, He claimed too much. They never expected God. And He was too little. They never expected an outcast. RESULT? Two worlds collided: Darkness vs Light. Evil vs Good. The silent collision: "Crash. Boom. Smash." Lamb found dead. For 3 hours a dark world looked the other way as the Light flickered out.^{12/45} But the explosion that followed three days later is felt today. The Son shines with His extraordinary light and resurrection power waiting to crown every outcast who believes what the world denies.

"HE WHO PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL... WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE..." (JAMES 1:12)



and knows they fuel the nightmares and mind maze you can't seem to escape. His "hands were tied", as He was beaten, by this world as an outcast. But He snuck back in, by His Spirit, to infuse His Sonship.



I'm not lying to you, bro. The Holy Spirit is real.³⁶ His anointing is not some weird religious ritual. Focus on love. You can do that. The touch you want is the touch you will receive as you give what you want to another. It's how everything with sonship works. Faith works through love.⁴¹ It works, my brother. It works. Don't worry about failure. Don't fret over wicked inclinations. Just keep going. Open your "eyes". Something extraordinary will move in your daily spectrum. He's in the

"THUS SAYS THE HIGH AND EXALTED ONE WHO LIVES FOREVER, WHOSE NAME IS HOLY, 'I DWELL ON A HIGH AND HOLY PLACE, AND ALSO WITH THE CONTRITE AND LOWLY OF SPIRIT IN ORDER TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF THE LOWLY AND TO REVIVE THE HEART OF THE CONTRITE' "
- 15:57:15

EXTRAORDINARY

An outcast, by nature, has everything against him. He has no visitors, no phone calls or letters waiting. No lawyer. No retrial. No one. No ordinary motivation. But, at the last minute, one last thought, doing one last thing, instead of turning over again in his bed, instead of pacifying despair, he chooses a heart, faith and will to do some extra... ordinary thing. It happens once, then again and again. Ever so small, but becoming something extra ordinary. God increases His anointing. Two way relationship happens from simple exertion of a heart, faith, and will.

Saul was a powerful king, but remained ordinary because he had no heart. David was the outcast among his brothers, but was crowned as anointed because of his heart, mind, and faith. Heart makes the outcast extraordinary.

Cain met the status quo, Abel gained God's favor. Jacob was 'lesser' than Esau, but fought for and stole his blessing. Two criminals hung dying next

wind whispering. *"Trust me. I'm here. I love you."* You have no idea where He can take you. Life does not come from "out there" but from Him, within. I've learned this voice. I am not a preacher, minister or chaplain. I am fully secure as a son. I switched my allegiance and betrayed this world for the next. Brother, the heart and soul of our Father is to extend His exclusive bond of sympathy to crown us with the anointing of the living Christ, to become His Extraordinary Outcast.

YOU KNOW THE STIGMA AS AN OUTCAST OF THIS WORLD. WHY NOT SWAP IT OUT? RISE TO YOUR FALL. BE NOT IN A SHUT DOWN, BUT A BUILD UP.

There is a phenomenal reward for all sons in Christ who overcame some of the most severe wounds imaginable. They not only survived them, but chose to access the Spirit, so as to no longer walk under the rule of their pain.⁴⁰

Scriptures speak of a noble inner garment and armor worn by the extraordinary outcast; "splendid clothes instead of despair" (Eph. 6:12/ 1s.61:3-10). *Imagine one day we shall all be united in His elite league, consumed in one vision of the unseen Victor.* Kind of like sci-fi, but totally real. We await our release into our true identity. Imagine the joy of realizing you are a son, a prince, a warrior, a noble man who devised a noble plan (1s.32:8). Outwardly, you appear in the same old rugged manner. But inwardly, you wear a cape and armor befitting the Lion of Judah. *"Let my captors think I am a pawn. Soon they will see I am in the reign of the King"*.

For His trumpet will soon sound and He shall appear seated on a white horse in the sky (1Thess.4:16-17). "For behold, My reward is with Me to recompense the wicked and the righteous" (Rev.22:12).

If any part of this is true, than it is all true, because the nature of truth is absolute.

to Jesus. One was an ordinary cynic. The other was the first one into heaven. These men were not 'Biblical legends', but ordinary guys walking around doing the same kind of stuff we do today. Some simply chose to display extraordinary heart on an ordinary day. My brother, or sister, this is not beyond you or above you. It's right there within you.

Go past the common to do something extra. Faith comes by hearing. To hear the prompting of God. To act, to do, to be.

"BLESS THE LORD .. WHO PARDONS ALL YOUR GUILT, WHO HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES; WHO REDEEMS YOUR LIFE FROM THE PIT, WHO CROWNS YOU WITH FAVOR AND COMPASSION..." PS. 103:2-4

OUT OF NOTHING

Gal 4:7 explains that to be an heir means you are entitled to something special which you did nothing to earn. This is the gift of the anointing of Jesus. His Spirit brings an inner groan to replace the orphan groan: "Abba" (Father).³⁷ Jesus says "Father" 178 times. No earthly father can give the love we need to make us an heir to His royal privileges of grace, wisdom, etc.

THE ORPHAN or THE HEIR

Do you ever lay in your bunk thinking *"I got nothing. No one even knows I exist."*? Quite a normal feeling. But what if there is something to find in feeling nothing? Like, when you're doing nothing, like now, if you think of *something*, like what I'm saying, and it changes your life, then it was "out of nothing" that you found *something*. Pretty cool. This is the actual story of the origin of faith. An old pagan named Abraham was miserable in the desert. One night, staring at stars, He found "something": faith, while doing nothing. Just contemplating the stars made him believe in God. No ceremony or ritual. This is how God works: in "the things that are nothing" 1 Cor.1:28. If God starts with nothing, then we don't have to feel guilty dealing with our nothing. God created all His spectacular creation out of nothing. Just because He loves us.

Then He created us, with an extraordinary personal array in our physical presence and capacity of a heart; wired with 'conductors' like: personality, free will, mind, humor, memory, speech, feelings, ideas, creativity, love, etc. In comparison to creation, we are definitely something profound. So, surely, He must have created something for us do.

God told Abraham to just give the faith he found to other people. The faith he found "out of nothing" that night under the stars.^{57/116} So Abe gave it to his family and tribe. Then it spread to as many as the stars in the sky. So faith, out of nothing, gave everybody something. It made Abraham feel like someone out of his nothingness. So, if just one person tells you: *"Thanks, man. You gave me faith. You're something."*, you are an heir of Abraham.^{57/64} Bam. You shall be rewarded with something eternal. God promises to reward you here and now (Luk18:29). You matter, big time.

So you probably realized by now that prison has no golf, tennis, or fishing clubs. (They would get so boring so fast). A lot of guys laying in bunks feeling like nothing. They wonder if there is just nothing. You can create love out of nothing. Faith works through love. Satan wants you to think that all problems stem from being in prison. ⁴ No. They stem from being an "orphan". You can replace pain with power. Become a son.³⁷





An Old Woman On A Skateboard

I was running at 6 a.m. on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The sun had just broken the horizon and the smell of the morning filled my senses. Being the cheapskate that I am, I had decided to just keep running in an old, worn-out pair of shoes long after I should have. I felt like I was making free money by getting extra use out of them. So dumb. Sure enough, about 11 miles in, I started getting this weird pain in my hips and it was really bumming me out.

Right after the next crosswalk, someone in a wheelchair bike came racing towards me. He was a young, strong dude, just working it with his arms. As he got closer, I saw he was missing both feet, just nothing below the ankles. And I cringed inside. I was bothered by my shoes, while he'd have been grateful just to have two feet to put them on.

At the stoplight, I paused to stretch. Between the lanes of traffic, I saw a figure on a skateboard. An elderly woman, with no legs, was pushing herself along the asphalt, trying to sell gum. Using only her arms, she had to stretch as high as she could to offer the tiny packages into drivers' windows. I was humiliated. Because while I was wishing for other shoes, the young man was wishing he had feet. And this woman? She was just wishing she had any legs at all.

My friend, look around you right now. See anyone who might be wishing they had something that you take for granted? Eyes, ears, hands...? Perspective is a powerful tool to change the way we think.



Choose Your Own Adventure Basketball

There was a popular court in Compton, south LA, that was great for pickup games. Since you were taller and stronger than me, I asked if you could generously spot me a few points. Basketball has always been around in my family. I told you it had been awhile since we'd played. You laughed like that wouldn't matter much anyway. I made a few hoops, but after you made several layups and three-point shots, you were right! I didn't stand a chance. After that wipeout, you yelled to some of the guys watching and we had a real game going on! It was a riot. We were sweating hot but didn't care a bit. Good thing there weren't any refs around to call all the pushing and the shoving! We might have all been laughing, but believe me, it was competitive! When the game was over, one of the guys called out to you, "Hey, Viper, what's happening?" I guessed that name referenced your former life. You paused, and looked up at him, "That guy is not me anymore, dude, something is going on inside. I think Jesus is the real deal". I looked at you and nodded. You had told me that God had been dealing with you and that the things we had shared connected on a deep level. Your courage to shamelessly say His name to everyone around made you a true champion. "Anybody hungry? Pizza's on me!"



REFLECTIONS

From Our Brothers In Prison Around The Country & World

I CAN BE BIG

"We got this common room area we all use and have a rotation of who cleans it. It was this one kid's turn to clean it, but days went by and he didn't. Instead of making a big issue out of it, I took your advice about "being big" and just cleaned it myself. Seems like a small thing, but was an epiphany for me because I enjoyed the work, and the others really appreciated it. Made me realize, man, I can be so big if I want to."

JON S. - MICHIGAN

DELICIOUS

"Hey, you're right! Fasting for a day made me appreciate my food big time! It was the best unidentifiable slop I've ever had, haha. Seriously, I actually appreciated it so much more."

- TIAGO G. - PERNABUCO, BRASIL



ONE MOMENT

"This guy here is always picking fights with me and he tries to get under my skin, I swear. The other day, he moved my stuff and it ticked me off. But I did what y'all said and I let it go. Told him to keep whatever he needed. Now we are starting to get along. One moment, one change, and now things are startin' to get better."

- JAMES F. - COLORADO



CONNECTING WITH MY CHILD

"Hey, thank you for encouraging me to get more creative with how to love my son. He is ten and my relationship with him has actually increased since being here in prison. Now, when he comes to visit, our conversation goes farther than just small talk.

So what we are doing is working on a story together and each month, we each write a chapter. We brainstormed about the basic storyline and we settled on a story about knights and kings. In the story, he is a king since he is home taking care of mama, in his "castle", and I am the king here in this "castle" fighting dragons. We read parts to each other over the phone and he has even been sketching some drawings. My cellie, the cook, and the chaplain here serve as inspiration for characters in the book. Hey, who knows, maybe we will get a best seller out of this!"

JUSTIN D. - FLORIDA

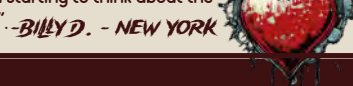


BACK TO SQUARE ONE

"I sat dumbfounded.... I'm praying 24/7, fasting, going to church and reading the Bible all day as my only source of entertainment. But there is one thing nobody can fix: stupid. I was religious. I'm walking that Pharisee walk. Knowing scripture isn't a relationship with Christ.

Being the Pharisee I thought I wasn't, I couldn't understand why God didn't swoop in supernaturally and save me. Luckily, you kept telling me what I couldn't see for myself, I was blinded. I had no real relationship with Christ. Pride, ego, self-deception ruled my strategy. 'Mr. Humble me', of all people!! 'A servant to all and a child of God!' LOL. I was a fool. I was doing, not being. Martha busy but not Mary abiding in His Presence.

I'm going to reread your materials. After all this time, I thought I arrived in understanding. But it's like I'm at square one. Self-pity, self everything, has held me hostage. I need to start learning how to build on rock. I've taken a step back from my religious rituals, and am starting to think about the words I pray and talk to Him authentically."



Let's Be Real

*Let's be real
we aren't made of steel,
we think, we bleed, we hurt, we feel.
Life takes a tragic turn,
and we can't control the wheel.
Inside we burn,
the shock seems so surreal.
We want others to be concerned,
yet the pain remains concealed.
There's no one to explain nor confirm
the reason for such an ordeal.
Yet it is in this place alone we learn,
the answer is revealed.
The relief for which we yearn,
is found only when we yield,
the binding of our wound to Jesus,
on His terms of surrender we are healed.*

Elizabeth



MY EXPERIENCES IN THE THIRD-WORLD

BY DAVID GABRIEL

Hospital of JABOATÃO

It was such a beautiful Sunday evening. I could have never imagined I was about to tear my Achilles tendon for the second time in 5 years. So, instead of being the DJ and performer in 18 upcoming events in the prisons of Northeastern Brazil, I went to the emergency room. We should bet which is worse: prison 'health care' or third-world Brazilian public health care? Prison is probably worse, but Brazil ain't far behind. After waiting 10 hours to get an MRI, the doctor confirmed that it was a complete Achilles tear. I would need surgery.

So they put me in an ambulance and, yes, much to my joy, he did turn on the sirens and drive into oncoming traffic. We arrived at the first hospital, Octavia de Freitas. It was such an 'award-winning' hospital that they had plaques on the walls everywhere warning against Tuberculosis, Zika, and personal items getting stolen. Fantastic! I'm going to get Zika and then... get robbed.

Even in tough situations, I

always keep my sense of humor. So, I couldn't help but laugh as I imagined these injured and ailing people trying to rob each other. They'd have to work together on it. *The guy with the broken arm helps the guy with a heart condition steal the*

shoes from the guy who injured his legs. And they can't leave, so they're just sitting next to each other, and the guys are like, "Uh, hey, you're wearing my shoes." The other guy says, "Yeah, and you're wearing my watch." "Yeah, well, how about the last one with the stuff before surgery keeps it?"

The nurse who was pushing me on the gurney repeatedly said, "Don't freak out when we get to this next area." I blew her off until we turned the corner and I saw what she meant. Then I was like, 'Oh, okay, I get it now. Definitely freakoutable.' I was going to spend the night there, in a gurney, in a hallway, with blaring fluorescent lights, 30+ injured, crying, sick, and bleeding people. It reminded me of a disaster movie. Doctors and nurses were running around, people were shouting for assistance, and the food was barely edible.

Eduardo

It was about 1 a.m., yet I was so wide awake that it felt like 1 p.m. Eduardo came up to me and, in an unnecessarily hushed tone, asked me where I was from. He was here with his mom, who was dealing with an unknown illness. He had suffered a brain injury from a car accident 4 years ago. Eduardo said, "I've been dealing with serious stuff recently. I find myself having very dark thoughts about my life. 'Irmão', ('Brother' in Portuguese) I want to give up."

I told him, "Listen to me, Eduardo, I know those thoughts feel so overwhelming and so isolating. At some point in life, so many wonder whether or not they're going to make it." I looked over and saw our reflection in the glass window. I pointed to it and said, "Look, Eduardo. See your face? You are beautiful. I see God in you.

Were you born to give up and let the darkness win? Is that really what you want? No. Of course not. That's not even an option. That's never an option. Don't even go there in your thoughts. Right now, it's like, for example, your arm is caught in a crevice. The pain is excruciating, but it's just stuck. It WILL come out and it will heal. Be patient. The way you feel right now will not last forever. In weeks, months or years you will look back with a completely different mindset."

I told a lame joke about a penguin and he actually laughed. He seemed surprised at himself that he did. At times, humor can pop the bubble of sadness. Then I told him to come with me and I hobbled over to another hospital bed where a young man, Cisco, was sitting. I introduced Eduardo to him and put Eduardo's arm over Cisco's shoulder. It was awkward at first, but then we got talking. I saw Eduardo smile and take interest in Cisco's injury. When we were back in our beds, I said, "Purpose, irmão! God wants you to give Him, in you, to others. You forget about yourself, that's how you fight. And Eduardo, when those dark thoughts come, say the name "Jesus" out loud, and don't stop saying it on the inside. It's like magic."

The Men In Plaster

The next day I got moved to Hospital Jaboatão, where I would wait my turn to have surgery.

I got put in a room with 8 other guys in arm and leg casts. The Men In Plaster. I forgot to mention it's 105 degrees here with 90% humidity and zero air conditioning. The depression of this place was thick. Spending every day just sitting on a bed, sticky from sweat, and unable to walk took its toll. Then I looked around and realized there were 10 other rooms full of people that were mentally and physically suffering much more than I was. And honestly, feeling sorry for myself didn't help. It only made the depression worse.

Self-pity is like the sweet embrace of a python. It hugs you dearly while slowly draining your life and killing your will to conquer. Is it justified? Maybe. But who cares? It's killing you. Self-pity has no life value. It gives no victory, only casualties.

I had everything inside me necessary to make someone else's day, so I got off my lazy cot and set out to do so. It's incredible how we

can just choose to change someone's life. I got a deck of cards, and with the only card trick I knew, went to the different rooms, trying to make them laugh and sharing Jesus with them.

I was shocked at how the whole atmosphere changed. It was like a burden had been lifted, and it dawned on us that we didn't have to be miserable in a miserable place. We didn't have to sulk in our suffering. I got a game board and taught them how to play chess, and they taught me how to play checkers.

Kaique

It was my third day here when Kaique Romulo came over to play. His grandfather was killed in a bar fight. So Kaique's father got revenge, killing the man that killed his granddad, and served 16 years in federal prison. A similar life had always been the obvious path for Kai. He was poor, from the favela,

where everyone treated him like a 'moleque,' a good-for-nothing street kid, because of his appearance.

Finding a job was extremely difficult. A friend recommended him as a driver for an upper-class businessman. Kai jumped at the opportunity. He drove the businessman around, acted as his security, and took care of his money. When the boss told him to give money to a cop, it dawned on Kaique that he was becoming corrupt in a country wrought with the corruption that everyone complained about.

Walking home that night, he sat down with a homeless man and asked him, "What brought you to this point?" The homeless man said he had found his wife with another man and couldn't bear it. He left his home and never looked back. He went to the bar, and it started with just a few drinks and then snowballed after that. He said this was the only thing left for him. *That stuck with Kai.*

We can convince ourselves that misery is our only option and allow it to destroy our lives. At that moment, Kai realized he never wanted to be the person that said, "This is all that's left for me." So he quit and found work at a Doritos factory. He loves holidays because the boss lets him take some Doritos





home to his daughter.

He was downtown, buying bulk candies to resell, when two guys grabbed him and stole everything. As they were leaving, one of the thieves turned back and smashed him four times with a heavy stick. They broke his arm in two places.

He was quite a singer/rapper too. I would beatbox, and he would 'spit' on top in the middle of the hospital. I encouraged him to use his talent to inspire and lift others. If he could bring in a message of hope and deeper meaning, it would leave a lasting effect on his listeners. Then I had to encourage him to know when *not* to sing, like after 9 pm in a quiet hospital. Yeah, he never really got that part.

Roberto

Roberto (above) was 75, but you wouldn't guess it with his mischievous smile and the skip in his step. His jeans were too long, so they were rolled up 8 times. He couldn't really figure out his belt, so every morning, he would ask me to help get him situated. I became his official 'Belt Helper' guy. I didn't know that was a position, but I'm actually pretty good at it. Roberto was a beautiful man. He served in the Brazilian military when he was younger and was excited to tell me about the places he got to visit. He spoke a handful of English words and visibly glowed whenever he used them.



He asked me if I was an early or late sleeper, and I told him I always stayed up late. He was so glad to hear that, because he couldn't sleep most nights. Anxiety from nothing in particular kept him awake, so he would pace the halls late into the night. He said he preferred sleeping on the wooden bench to the soft bed in his room. *It dawned on me that he was in fact, tragically, homeless and was more used to benches and wandering at night than a soft cushion and pillow.* I told him I too have anxiety, for no apparent reason sometimes. And in these moments, I talk to Jesus and ask Him to come to me.⁸⁴ It also helps me to inhale and exhale to slow my heart rate. He said he would try it. The following day he was happy to tell me he'd slept better and was sure he got at least a few hours.

Estefan

Estefan (bottom left) was not impressed by the card tricks I did, nor that I was an American. He was very calloused and hardcore and almost seemed angry at me. But four days in, kindness won by attrition. One late night, when I was sitting alone, he came and sat beside me. I asked what happened to him.

He got drunk one day and jumped on his motorcycle. He was gonna wear his helmet, but the alcohol gave him a sense of foolish dare, and he chose a baseball cap instead. When someone pulled out in front of him, he couldn't react quickly enough and smashed head-on. He broke his arm and split open his head, needing 15 stitches.

When I asked him if they did a neurological exam to see if there was any internal damage, he was glad to tell me that it came back negative. I wanted to cry when I realized he was unaware of his 'freezes'. Brief moments in our conversation when both eyes would close, and he would completely disconnect and then continue as if nothing had happened.

The neuro exam had not come back negative. *Estefan had catastrophic brain damage and didn't even realize it.* In a hushed tone, he tells me he spent 15 years in prison for killing a man. The tattoo on his forehead was the only name he knew, given to him by a gang. He kept making this symbol "#" with his fingers, symbolizing the bars he wasted away behind. I told him that it wasn't his past that mattered but that, at any moment, his whole life could be redeemed in Jesus. He held on to the gospel of John I gave him as if it were his favorite possession.

At the end of my stay, he quietly and almost abashedly asked if I had another hat like the one I was wearing. Like a little boy in a beat-up man's body, he just wanted someone to care about him. I gave him mine and he was intensely grateful for that worn-out baseball cap. Jesus says I did not come to call respectable people but outcasts.⁶⁹ Extraordinary Outcasts.

We Got A Runner

Kaique, Ronald, and I had a push-up competition. They were one-handed, and I was one-footed. I clearly won, but I let them think they did because, you know, I'm the bigger (and stronger) man. We had a good laugh when I saw Ronald had a tattoo in English that said, *"Keep going until the thrill of speed overcomes the fear of death."* And his arm was broken from speeding on a motorcycle.

"We got a runner!" We suddenly heard being shouted down the halls. The funniest sight ever came towards me. This shorter man, pants falling down, about 65 years old, was making his escape. In the public health system, once you're in the system, you can't leave, or you'll lose your spot. He didn't care, though. He was done. We all understood and cheered him on. He turned the corner, kept his footing, and exited the sliding doors just before the nurses could reach him. I wonder where he is today. *A true Hospital Break.*

This facility had strict rules about what was

allowed in, but I had contacts on the outside, so I was known as 'the guy' who could get you what you needed. Snickers? I gotchu. Little orange-flavored muffin? Yup. I even smuggled in a whole pizza.

I'd have one of my 'mugs' distract the nurses. Then we'd quickly pass each other in the hallway, give the nod, and do the secret handoff. If you let me beat you at checkers, I'd get you almost anything. I became known as El Snackarone. No one actually called me that, but I'm sure it's what they were thinking. Some nurses caught wind and started snooping around, asking one too many questions about

who was El Snackarone. But it wasn't anything a small plush toy or king-size candy bar couldn't take care of, so we operated without a problem.

After about 14 days in this 'Hilton', we got word that those in our room would have surgery the next day.

I had never had surgery before, and I was pretty nervous. I had hoped to talk to the surgeon beforehand, looking for some personal reassurance and care. But

it wasn't like that at all. He was just processing patients as fast as possible because there were so many. So, I had to gird up, pray hard, and trust Jesus.

I was given spinal tap anesthesia and was semi-awake during the surgery. It was a bizarre yet fascinating sensation as I could feel them pulling the tendon from high up in my leg and bringing it back together.

It lasted about 3 hours and went perfectly. Thank you, Jesus. I was discharged later that same day. I couldn't walk for 2 months, then 8 months of therapy, and I'm still working towards getting back to 100%. I'll never forget those days in Hospital Jaboatão. Even though we were each suffering through so much individual pain, we fought through and found a way to help each other overcome.

When I walked, or rather limped away on those crutches, I realized I had learned a lot. Time goes by so quickly and if I'd had just done nothing, nothing would have been what was done. There is a lot more stuff inside me than I'd like to admit at times. Stuff that other people need if I'm willing to just step outside my comfort zone, and go adventuring to touch the lives of my buddies scattered down the halls of this broken world.





Where am I? How in the world did I get here? Nothing is normal. Nothing is okay. Everything is bizarre. I can't even breath the air. What are these clothes I have to put on? The food is tasteless. There is no gravity, I can't even stand on solid ground. Where is my other life? Where are my boots and my belt? I can't walk to the fridge and grab something? There is no fridge? I can't walk around?

Many have described to me the bizarre experience of landing in prison saying, "It was like landing on another planet." All the sensory touch points of everyday life are vanquished in the blink of an eye. You undergo radical atmospheric change with nothing, and no one, to normalize the experience. No "decompression chamber." When any "radio transmission" from the outside is cut off, panic can set in.

Now, not everyone will be able to get this, and each person at a different time and level, so bear with me. But there is a thought progression that can be like putting on a special suit with an oxygen tank of hope and anti-gravity boots of reality. It can ground you, and help you survive on planet prison.

Yes, you are 'watching life go by from a distance.' But let's set aside the fantasies that dance in our minds of 'happy people, living happy lives,' and deal with reality for a moment. How many on the outside are slaves to jobs they hate, because of a debt they can't pay, for things they don't care about, with a family they yell at, in a house they can barely afford? Millions? Billions? Hear the sigh of the masses saying, "I just can't stand this", as they get up in the morning to face another empty day in another empty life. The life you are missing by being in prison.

Now, this is the good part: God explains that to grab hold of His life, you must lose your life in this world.¹⁷ Jesus says, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" So one could say that some of the things out there, that you are missing, are the very things that steal away the time and heart needed to find His life.¹⁸

Could it not be to your advantage if the things you are missing out on are the very things that would destroy you? Could sitting on 'another planet,' watching life from a distance, give you a unique vantage point, by which you can see things you would have otherwise never seen, thus creating the possibility to discover eternal life which you would have otherwise never known?

Mr. Davis was in prison, and things just kept getting worse than they were

before,

Till he got to the point, he couldn't take it anymore.

He was so angry at God, he decided to write Him a letter,

Figured it couldn't make things worse, but maybe he'd feel better.

Didn't figure God would write back, just wrote on a whim,

Because of all people who let him down in life, well, he was most angry at Him.

So he started it out, "Dear God, everyone says You're so good, but You stay away so far, while I'm down here all alone with my pain and my scar.

I'm suffering injustice and You don't even see!

It's like You only, ever, let bad things happen to me.

I got a heart full of sadness, depression, and stress, where were You when I got into this mess?!"

Well, his emotions got stronger, as the letter got longer.

But he had no lamp and only one stamp.

So he had to bring it to an end, to give to the guard to send.

He signed it off with his name cuz he figured God forgot, then added at the end, "P.S. If You do get this, God, well, I could use You a lot."

So anyway, sometime later, the guard hands Mr. Davis a letter and

I swear he wanted to cry.

You're not even going to believe this, but God actually sent him a reply!

Wrote it down real long like a letter of love,

and the words God said, fit Mr. Davis' problems like a hand to a glove.

God said that this world doesn't even belong to Him, but to the devil below.

So Mr. Davis realized he was talking like an idiot, about things he didn't even know.

Despite this, God said He completely understood,

Even said He didn't expect him to be good.

Said His own Son suffered in this dark world too,

That's why He's got another world that's better and new.

Said of course He knew his name, It's the reason He came.

And the faith he would need is the size of a seed,

Then God would get on his side, in exchange for his pride.

Plus give him other good stuff like hope and grace,

and, even, a purpose in that sad place.

So Mr. Davis realized God's letter was not merely black letters on white pages,

But a divine portal to discover the God of the ages.

A place to go, a refuge, a land, And practical answers to things he did not understand.

So if you're kind of like Mr. Davis, and you want things to get better,

Get your hands on a New Testament, and read God's letter.



I once met a guard whose name was Bard. I thought it was funny how it rhymed but he did not. He had heard it for years and got tired of it. He got tired of a lot. He got tired of the halls and the walls and endless calls. He wore a cold icy expression on his face, as he walked his rounds, but inside his mind was in another place.

He took the job because in the small town where he was from, it was the only stable place to work. *"There will always be crime, therefore there will always be prisons, and they will always need guards,"* he reasoned within himself.

He was a tough guy on the high school football team until he tore his ACL. It never healed right and he walked with a limp. Made the keys jingle on his belt and everyone knew he was coming. Guard Bard. He started off being decent with the inmates. Thought he'd win some respect and create a great place to work. That was, of course, until a couple of guys tricked him into a humiliating situation. *No more Mr. Nice Guy.* He became cold as ice.

He had big dreams growing up of starting his own business and traveling abroad. *But mom got sick, little brother kept getting into trouble, dad wasn't around, and the wheel of misfortune kept spinning.* Now, here he was. Didn't seem like a bad place to work, he told people he liked it. But he didn't. He hated it with every fiber of his being. He'd have quit a long time ago, but needed the benefits and feared no one else would hire him with his limp.

One day, he came home and couldn't believe his eyes. Everything in his home was gone. Including his wife. She took it all and left. His heart was obliterated. He could barely get out of bed in the morning. Some days he thought he wouldn't. But he carried on at work like nothing happened. He knew no one cared. Everything was gray, everyone was mean. He was in a prison all his own.

One afternoon, as he was standing in the corridor, a memory flashed across his mind and a tiny tear rolled down his face. He thought no one saw it, but an inmate did. The inmate leaned over to him and said, *"Hey, brother, you're gonna be okay. You know, you're alright, Bard. Be strong, brother."* Bard snapped back, *"Get back against the wall, and I ain't your brother."* But Bard was shocked inside. Days went on and he kept thinking about it. He tried to ignore it and keep up his image, but it effected him. That same inmate passed him in the hall again and gave him a slight nod. Wasn't much but it said a lot. Bard started to feel human. The other inmates noticed.

One night, Bard dropped his keys and a big mouth started up "Guard Bard..." But another inmate shut him down, "Nah, man, he's cool. Lay off, it's been a long day." Slowly, the dynamic changed. Months went on and the ice began to thaw.

- Joshua



I was talking with a friend of mine named Thomas, who's serving time in a Michigan prison. He told me that when he first got locked up, he couldn't believe the number of doctrines and cults people tried to push on him. He referred to it as the "Religious Breakfast Bar". He said, "You got your nuts and flakes over there, your bananas and fruity loops over here and the cuckoo puffs are at the end... Oh, and don't forget all the lucky charms."

We shared a pretty good laugh. He then asked, "Seriously, how do I keep my mind straight, and not get lost in the 'woods' of all the different denominations and religions? I'm scared of getting caught up in something that seems normal, but leads to something strange. I've seen a lot of guys go off the deep end. I don't want that to be me."

I said, "Hey, Thomas, you ever had to use a compass?" One time I went on a lone hike, deep in the Yellowstone backcountry. Just ahead of me, a grizzly thundered right across my path. In the panic of the moment, I lost my bearings. Everything looked the same. I didn't know where I came from or where I was headed. The fear of vanishing into the forest was even more terrifying than that bear.

Thankfully, I remembered I packed a compass. The month prior I'd taken a course on how to use it. It always points True North. But I learned that magnetic things can cause it to point in the wrong direction or even spin. If you wear a metal watch when you read the compass, you'll be going a few degrees off without knowing it. You'd end up miles away from where you need to go.

Each of us has a compass within. Our conscience does not point us to any doctrine, teaching, or religion, but rather to the Father who created us and His witness in nature.^{21/22} Life just gets so dang boring that we long for some new, novel idea that seems exciting. We don't want a pathetic system of beliefs, so we go out to the fringes to look for something we can call our own. The pride of knowledge that comes from random spirituality and philosophy is a dark forest that many get lost in. Yeah, sure, it feels good to know more than others. But just like that metal watch that throws off a compass, so does that pride cause our inner compass to spin.

Brother, please, don't deny the operation of your conscious and its common-sense witness that points to the God of the universe manifested in Jesus. Avoid being clever. Cling to what is solid. Sincerity and reality will guide your inner compass.

- Abraham



W O N D E R F U L L Y

People say that you cannot see God. It all depends on how you look. You can see the wonder of God and His Characteristics all around you. Look at your body, stare into your amazing eyes, and watch your fingers and limbs move, all being commanded by your incredible brain. Feel your heartbeat and hear its rhythm, as it keeps you alive without any conscious thought on your part. Take a deep breath and contemplate your composition. All this shows you God, my brother. See Him!

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...' Gen. 1:26

Brain Power

NEW BRAIN PATHS

Scientists once thought that by the age of 25 thought patterns were established and fixed by whatever had been learned up to that point. Not so! They have since discovered that every single morning, the brain creates NEW neurons (think of them like thought carriers), that are simply there, waiting to be accessed.

Routine, laziness, and bad habits can keep us locked into the lie "I am who I am and I'll always be this way." But, my dear friend, the simple spark of a new thought can generate a new brain path. You can get those neurons firing. And it is "contagious" for the rest of your brain. The old brain paths you have established over the years can yet be changed. I'm almost 70 and am learning and doing new things I have never done in my whole life.



There are close to 100 billion neurons in the brain, about the same as the number of stars in the Milky Way.

Your brain's storage capacity is considered virtually unlimited. Each neuron forms connections to other neurons, which could add up to 1 quadrillion (1,000 trillion) connections. Over time, these neurons can combine, increasing storage capacity.

When a neuron is stimulated, it generates an electrical impulse that travels from cell to cell at 268 mph.

The greatest computer in the world takes about 40 minutes to process the same information our brain can process in one second.

THE EYE HAS NOT SEEN...

Your eyes are the most used muscles in your body. They have 2 million working parts.

The eyes are the second most complex organ after the brain.



Our eyes function like a camera, capturing light and sending data back to the brain. 80% of our memories are determined by what we see.



In the right conditions and lighting, the human eye can see the light of a candle 14 miles away.

- 14 Miles -



The human brain can generate about 23 watts of electricity (enough to power a lightbulb). All that energy calls for some much-needed rest. Adequate sleep helps maintain the pathways in your brain.



Your eye only sees red, blue, and yellow. It's your brain that combines the colors, so that the human eye can actually perceive, and differentiate between 10 million colors.

DEEP HEART 5K WORLD PRISON RACE

SEPTEMBER 1ST & MARCH 1ST (EVERY YEAR)

Join with us and thousands of other inmates in the USA and other countries by walking, jogging, or running a 5k (3.1 miles) on these dates. A day we will all "synchronize" and think and pray for each other wherever we are in the world.

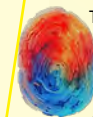
REDUCE STRESS THROUGH BREATHING

The average lung holds 6 liters. An average breath is only .5 liters. Breathing slowly and deeply can help reduce stress. Lie on your back. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Hold it for a few seconds. Then let it out slowly.



YOU ARE ONE OF A KIND

Your fingerprint has 40 and the iris of your eye has 256 characteristics unique to you, unlike anyone else on earth.



There are 8 billion people in the world. Not one fingerprint the same. What kind of mark do you leave on the places you go and the lives you touch?

SEEING THE UNSEEN

Your eyes are intricately connected to your brain, so as you see things, you connect them to a field of thoughts. You can choose how to decipher what you look at. You can see the same things, people, or surroundings, every day and choose to "see" them with a different perspective and light. When a group of men went to spy out the promised land, the majority saw a powerful enemy and were full of fear. Joshua and Caleb saw the bounty of the land, believed God's promise, and knew they could conquer. Same land, different vision.

What do your eyes see when you think of your past? How do you see your future? The promise of John 3:3 is to "...see the kingdom..." What does this mean? Paul says the things that are seen, i.e. the bars, the walls, the cells, are temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal. So expand your inner vision, brother, and fix your eyes on Jesus.

Knees are the most complicated joint in the body and use 10 muscles to function. Warming up and stretching these muscles can help the knee to move better and reduce joint pain.

You take 1 to 3 million steps per year. When you think about it like that, taking a step in a new direction is really no big deal.

There are about 600 muscles in the human body. The three main types of muscle include skeletal, smooth, and cardiac. The brain, nerves, and skeletal muscles work together to cause movement.

No medical advice is being given on this page. Images are purely illustrative. For all health related issues, consult a medical professional.



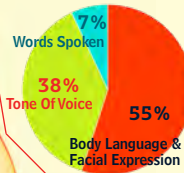
...AND THE EAR HAS NOT HEARD...

HOW SOUND WORKS

Sound is a type of energy made by vibrations. When an object vibrates, it causes movement in surrounding air molecules. These molecules bump into the next molecules, causing them to also vibrate. Once they reach our ear, they cause the delicate membranes in our ears to vibrate. The 20,000 hair cells inside the ear then detect these sound waves and turn them into minute electrical signals that are sent to our brains, allowing us to hear.

Every 27 days the entire surface of your skin replaces itself.

93% OF IN-PERSON COMMUNICATION IS NONVERBAL



WILL ANYONE LISTEN?

Hemingway argued, "Most people never listen." It is indeed a rare skill. We all want to talk, but can we learn to listen to a brother? A man studied listening for 11 years and found that it is actually not a passive skill and that it is the listener that dictates the tone of conversation. A good listener will open doors for the speaker, helping them gain new insights into an issue, which can transform someone's life and pull them back from the brink of despair.

"Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."

Studies show that when having a conversation, your tone of voice, facial expression, and body language communicate more than the words you say. The same phrase can be said in hundreds of ways, each with a slightly different meaning. If you become aware of this and work on mastering communication, you will gain a major advantage in life.

BLOOD FLOW IS A BIG DEAL

You can increase blood flow by increasing physical movement (exercise of nearly any kind). Improved blood flow not only carries oxygen and nutrients all over your body, but it also carries metabolic waste and other toxins out of your system.

Increasing your blood flow is proven to:

- Make you feel better
- Fight depression
- Heighten brain activity & sharpness
- Reduce the signs of ageing
- Improve your heart health
- Make your skin look better
- Heal your body faster
- Help you lose weight



Your heart pumps 1.5 gallons of blood per minute, 2,000 gallons per day. In an average lifetime it pumps 1.5 million barrels of blood, enough to fill 200 train tank cars.



Every day the heart creates enough energy to drive a truck 20 miles. In a lifetime, that is like driving to the moon and back.



The blood vessels in your body laid end to end would reach 60,000 miles. That's more than twice around the world!

Your heart beats about 100,000 times a day. It is the only muscle that never tires.

...AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED

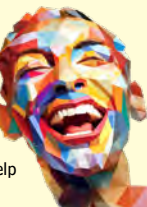
THE HUMAN HEART

ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."



The heart has its own electrical impulse and can even beat outside the body if it gets oxygen.

Laughing is good for your heart. It reduces stress and gives a boost to your immune system. Making the effort to draw others into laughter can diffuse tense situations, lift someone's spirit and help everyone's heart be stronger.



A HEART LIKE DAVID

The heart is the most vital organ in the body. *It literally keeps you alive. More incredible than any machine on earth, you don't even have to plug it in at the end of the night to recharge. It requires no oil, no fluid, no switches. God created it to just keep going.* I know it's tough to do in prison, but try to do whatever little things you can to keep it healthy: sleep, nutrition, letting things go to reduce stress, and mainly, exercise. Not just for losing weight and staying in shape, but for a healthy heart, mind, and body.

What kind of heart do you have beating inside you? It's the one thing God wants more than anything else. He says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Pr. 4:23). Be careful with what, who, and how you engage it. Don't give it away. Don't let anyone trample it. Turn it on and let it rip.

Ever heard of a guy named David (1&2 Samuel, Psalms)? Not a religious bone in his body. He wasn't a choirboy. *He was a deep heart.* He killed Goliath and a thousand Philistine soldiers and became the ultimate warrior-king of all time. Not bad. Then he would sit in silence and write poems of his profound love for the unseen God. He was a real man; wild, strong, on fire, yet broken. One of the greatest men to ever live. Why? God said, "he is a man after My own heart" and a prototype of Jesus, the Son of David (Acts 13:22).



The adult human body has 206 bones. There are 26 bones in the human foot. The human hand, including the wrist, contains 54 bones. The femur or thigh bone, is the longest and strongest bone.



Sound Frequencies

The Outer Ear

Acoustic Canal

The Ear Drum

The Inner Canals

FINDING EQUILIBRIUM

In addition to hearing, our ears regulate our equilibrium. They are crucial to your balance. Inside your inner ear is a fascinating maze-like structure of three canals filled with fluid and small hair cells that detect the rotational movement of your head. Each semi-circular canal is located at a different angle so your brain can judge how and where your head is moving. The movement of the fluid in your ears tells your brain where to find balance and how to control motion.

In the same way to find equilibrium in your life, it comes through your 'ears'. There is only one force that can equal all the forces of opposition we face in this world. It is what Jesus did on the cross. This is the only force powerful enough to outweigh all the negativity that bombards you every day. These thoughts can only come through 'hearing' His thoughts in His Word. To 'hear' and understand the weight of His suffering will counterbalance the weight of your suffering and give you equilibrium.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, & THE UGLY

"EVER NOTICE HOW YOU COME ACROSS SOMEBODY. ONCE IN A WHILE, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE MESSED WITH? THAT'S ME."

-THE OUTLAW

— WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PETER A.K.A RAVEN —

The Wild West of the 1800s created the cowboy who had to conquer a dark wild of grizzlies, snakes, starvation, disease, fierce winters, gunfights, and if deemed an 'outlaw', an instant hanging.

The Civil War in the East and the chaos of the West made this a most difficult time in history. It demanded a new breed of bravado. It required a "No Fear" gaze of magnitude and significance. Now, here you are, facing your own Wild West, in need of an extraordinary "bravado" to conquer your dark wild.

Brother, I can only imagine how your soul has been ripped apart for so long in so many ways, facing a different kind of "beasts" and "gunfights." I know you blame yourself for a myriad of complex issues. *So I beg you to listen to me.* Please. Give me a chance to get inside your head. I'm not lying to you.

In the ultimate search for what we're made of, we can discover the truth of what it is that makes our weakness, failure, and wickedness, all non-issues. The accusations you suffer are not due to who you are, but something that is in you. What put you in prison did not come out of a "criminal DNA disposition." It came from something that dwells in you of which you have no idea.

"SO YOU GONNA DO SOMETHIN' OR ARE YOU JUST GONNA STAND THERE AND BLEED?" -WYAT EARP, TOMBSTONE.

12 million brothers incarcerated around the world feel this groan: *"Do I have the destiny of a criminal?"* They don't understand that this thinking comes from the lie that: *Good people may do bad, but are essentially good. But bad people, well now, they may do good, but are essentially bad.*⁹

Sheriff Virgil Earp, Wyatt, Doc Holiday and Wild Bill Hickock were in the most famous shootout in history. 30 shots in 30 seconds. "The Vendetta Ride" at the O.K. Corral was

an attempt to disarm bad outlaws. But court documents reveal that the "good guys" may have slaughtered the "bad guys" out of personal vengeance, not to uphold the law.

Historical events like this show how conflicts and wars give no clue to who are the good or bad people. Yet society continues to insist "good" people would never think or do the bad things that arise in the "criminal disposition."

BRANDED

Ever hear someone say about you, "Oh, we never thought he was *that kind of bad*." So you conclude, "I must be *that kind of bad*." The professionals learn and pass on institutional theory. So they classify men accordingly. I have sat with so many brothers who concede to a label because, when any man sits alone, especially in prison, he does not understand his own darkness so he accepts this "branding."

He links his depression to outward things and wrongly accepts this label, relegating him to being treated as a lower species of life. This is an outrageous contradiction to the creation of man. God created all men in His very image (Gen.1:26-27). He does *not* implant a DNA of a felon, drug addict, sex offender, alcoholic, etc. That would make Him a monster. It is society that invents labels to distinguish themselves as good, from the bad and the ugly.

Jesus uses one word to describe the source of all these complex issues that we experience: "DARKNESS" (John 1:5, 3:19). A man who walks in it does not know where he goes, who he is, or what he is doing (John 8:12/12:35). No one else in the history of the world has ever defined darkness as the source of our chaos. *Yet every man faces this inner torment.*

WHAT DEPTH OF
MAN IS UNDER HIS
STETSON HAT?



"A SUCCESSFUL MAN IS ONE WHO CAN LAY A FIRM FOUNDATION WITH THE BRICKS OTHERS HAVE THROWN AT HIM."

-AUGUSTUS MCRAE, LONESOME DOVE

It is like the dark matter described by scientists in deep space. It is so heavy, it crushes in on you with its weight of gravity. Can't touch it or push it away. Can't see it in a microscope. It has no color, shape, size or handle. Can't say "Here it is. This is it. Get rid of it."

I've watched many a 'badass' collapse, including myself, under the 'weight of its gravity.' When I was a youngster, I had no one to teach me how to develop a heart to resist, or master, conflict. So I internalized an attitude of *'The hell with life. I'm screwed. I give up.'* This was in the early stages of my life, so as I got older, guess what took over? Darkness.

"I TRIED BEING REASONABLE, I DIDN'T LIKE IT." -CLINT EASTWOOD- PALE RIDER

Hi, my name is Michael. I'm a badabolic. It all started when society rejected me for not having the ticket: Be Good To Fit In. It awakened depression, anxiety, and fear. I knew I was in trouble. An outcast and an outlaw. I wasn't good at faking 'good'. How about you? Who are we trying to fool, right? The only thing I'm good at is bad. If only I had been born in the Wild West, the land and time of the outlaw, I know I'd fit in. I'd know exactly what to do... be myself. Deal with real. Bad comes easy. It's my nature.



"THE PRINCIPLE OF EVIL" -ROM.7:21

Brother, beneath our "badass" image is a man falling apart into a world of hurt and darkness. I'm just a fellow outcast who had to fight like hell to find real. I finally understood what it is within me that was destroying me. Now, it's your choice, brother. *You can cling to your image, remain in the dark wild, or choose to reach beyond your present state of understanding to change your "Time."*


"WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN US." -PAUL, AFTER DAMASCUS RIDE

Paul had killed many and suffered mental anguish from thinking he was still a good person. So when he was isolated in Arabia for 14 years, he fought to receive God's light on this dichotomy of good and bad within us. In Christ he explains "I do not understand what I AM doing. For I know nothing good dwells in me... I do the very evil I do not want to do... But if I do the very thing I hate... **I no longer am the one doing it but sin which dwells in me**" (Rom.7:15-24). Stop and think about this, brother. Either this is 'nuts' or God is answering our dilemma: "How could I have done what I have done? How can I ever live a good life if I am *that bad*? Why do I hate what I feel? *Why do I continue to fail at what I want?*?"

The word sin can spook you away because you think it is you and that God condemns you because of it (Rom.5:8/2Cor.5:19). Just the opposite. Paul explains that sin is an impersonal "it" that "dwells" in us. It is not YOU. It is something *in* you. Like a bad cold. It is not your personality. It is an objective, not subjective, entity. Its purpose is to destroy us with lies.

This is not an excuse to avoid accountability. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul says "*Wicked man that I AM... I AM scum... a dreg... the most weak and worthless man on the face of the earth...*" (Rom.7:24/1Tim.1:15/1Cor.4:13). *He uses present tense verbs to refer to the ongoing presence of sin within.* The thing about this, brother, is **it's not negative**. This is the most positive news you'll ever hear. Paul unmasked our inner nemesis of sin. If you get this, it's everything.

As a young man, when I graduated from little-boy bad stuff to big-boy bad stuff, I was labeled "criminal." It seemed to make sense, but it hurt like hell. It scared me, bro. How



You thought you were running from God, but you were running from a pain of something inside. Like an elk that is shot. It just takes off running. It's not running anywhere specific, it's just running from the wound inside. Brother, it's only the living Father Who can heal that wound and stop your running. He has loved you, through thick and thin. He tries to use your wound to steer you to Himself, that you might drop... into Him. Jesus says "Come to Me. I will give you rest. I did not come to condemn, but to heal... I did not come for the "good" but for the bad." 69/80

could I ever find a life in a society that demanded I be someone I could never be? I died inside.¹⁰ So when I read that God loves me, knowing I'm wicked, I was ecstatic.¹⁸ It ended my inner torment of thinking *I had to be good when I knew I was bad*. God was telling me that the bad in me was not my bad. Yeehaw.

It's crazy how guys want to appear "bad," but when confronted with real bad, get mad. *Hello?* Brother, you got to take advantage of what I'm telling you. Sometimes, depression can burn so hot in me, I'd swear it is a physical ailment. Sin can eat guys like you and I for lunch. But now, I understand "it." The questions of "*Am I really bad? Am I any good? Am I hopeless or just misunderstood?*" are answered. You are not a bad person because you committed a crime. We are all bad people because we are all "born in sin" (Rom.3:23). *Sin dwells in our flesh* (Rm. 8:7).

"THERE ARE SOME THINGS A MAN JUST CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM."

-TRUE GRIT -JOHN WAYNE

So God is only asking us to admit what we already clearly see and deal with every hour, of every day. It destroys every man on the face of the earth with bizarre thoughts and feelings that make us think they are coming out of who we are, and not out of what it is in us. More than 700,000 suicides and 500,000 drug overdoses occurred last year. They didn't understand the darkness within. It's too late for them, but not for you, my man.

I'm not lying to you, brother. I know what I know. I most certainly am no good guy "preacher." We have to be gut-wrenchingly honest, my man. Why don't we really want God? Paul explains that there is a hate-God/love-God battle within each man (Rom.7:23).

Sadly, I watch my brothers get snared by social religionists. They fall prey to irrelevant platitudes, moral striving, a false love for God, and more mental

chaos. These "good" religionists actually cause mental health mayhem. How? They are false experts who have no idea what they are talking about. Their goal is not a personal God, for He is merciful to sinners. Their goal is to play god and affirm the dividing line of being "good" not "bad." They just want to feel better than anybody. *And it just happens to be you.* Don't let them guilt-trip you into trying to obey the law. I fought the Law and the Law won. The Law is not bad. It is good. But its only purpose is to show me the sin in me. "*...Through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*" (Go read: Rom.3:20, Rom 7:7-25)

Any effort to better myself contradicts God's revelation. He accepts us as we are. Because He has already revealed: "*There is none who does good. Not even one... our mouth is an open grave, our feet are swift to shed blood...we growl like a bear and moan like a dove*" (Read Rm.3:10-18/Is.59/Jer.17:9). The crime that put you in prison did not come out of a "criminal disposition." It came out of "*it*." Sin does not originate in you or I. We merely recycle the same exact evil that has ruled all generations starting when Satan deceived Adam and Eve. Paul says, "I find the principle of evil in me."¹⁰ In other words, our wicked ways are not "abnormal" but as "normal" as every other person on earth.

If you documented the characteristics of every civilization, they are the same: Hatred, murder, war, lust, greed, and corruption in every generation.

THE DARK WILD

There is a darkness that moves through us and around us, leaving chaos in its wake. It is like a gunslinger from hell. It seems to come out of nowhere, but it comes out of somewhere very specific.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



IF JESUS CAME AS A COWBOY: HORSE AND HAT, HE WOULD NOT CONDEMN, BUT SEEK OUT THE OUTLAW, AS A FRIEND.

Raw heart in hand, He'd ride up to any campfire: "Hey, Wild Bill. What's up? Can I sit a spell? Got a brew for Me there, Jesse? Brother, I have a fortune greater than any bank. And ya don't gotta rob Me. I'll give it all to ya in a New Frontier. The religionists say I should not hang with you, but this is Who I am. They say I committed a Capitol Crime by claiming to be God. But 'I AM THAT I AM.' It's true. A posse on my tail. All because I bring the Good, to the bad and the ugly. I know the dark and I AM the Light of the world: I know your pain and I AM the resurrection. I know the sin and I AM the way, the truth and the life. Give me a chance, bro? Catch a glimpse of a new horizon."

Jesse James thought he escaped the darkness of the Civil War by fleeing and heading West. But the darkness within brought out a brutal beast he couldn't escape. Because darkness is not some individual, bizarre character flaw that we say "comes out of nowhere." It actually comes out of somewhere very specific in us all.

Things like drugs, divorce, sexual perversion or mere anxiety can cause us to display behavior we never imagined. Ever think "It would be horrible if anyone knew what I was thinking"? So does everyone, but they won't admit it. Ever see the look on the face of someone after a terrible crime? It is the perplexed gaze of someone in an almost hypnotic trance. "How could I do that? What did I do?" It's like they beheld a brutal monster... in themselves. All are stunned. Both the victim and perpetrator are scorched. We are ravaged by our ravaging.

The capacity for the most wicked acts of all time lies within my sinful nature. At any moment, in any place, sin can unleash hell-bent thoughts of rage. It can arise out of anger and slowly culminate into outrageous impulses. It provokes anyone to strike out and do the "unthinkable." Then, we're absolutely dumbfounded over what just happened. This silent shame and regret eats away inside for hours, months, and years. It breeds innumerable dark consequences,

yet you never hear about sin in school, on TV, at trial or in any discussion group. But it controls the world. It is the "mystery of lawlessness" (2Thess.2:7/Mt.24:12/1Jn.3:4).

In the mining caves of West Virginia, a man can walk so far underground that suddenly imaginations explode into an instant frenzy of panic, "I'm too far in. I could never be rescued in time." Brother, this is not the way with God. No matter how far into the darkness you may have gone, you are never any farther from God than you were as a baby "born in sin" (Ps.51:5).

There is no reform-portal you must go through to change from a super-bad person into a good or better bad person than you were before. Sin is sin. I am as wicked today as I was before my first petty crime. Society and religion propose self-improvement as a fix. It may help guys get parole, but will never resolve "it." There is no sliding scale of morality that you must achieve before it rings the bell of "good enough." Jesus says "God alone is good."⁶⁵ Don't you see, brother? He did it all. Once and for all.⁴⁵

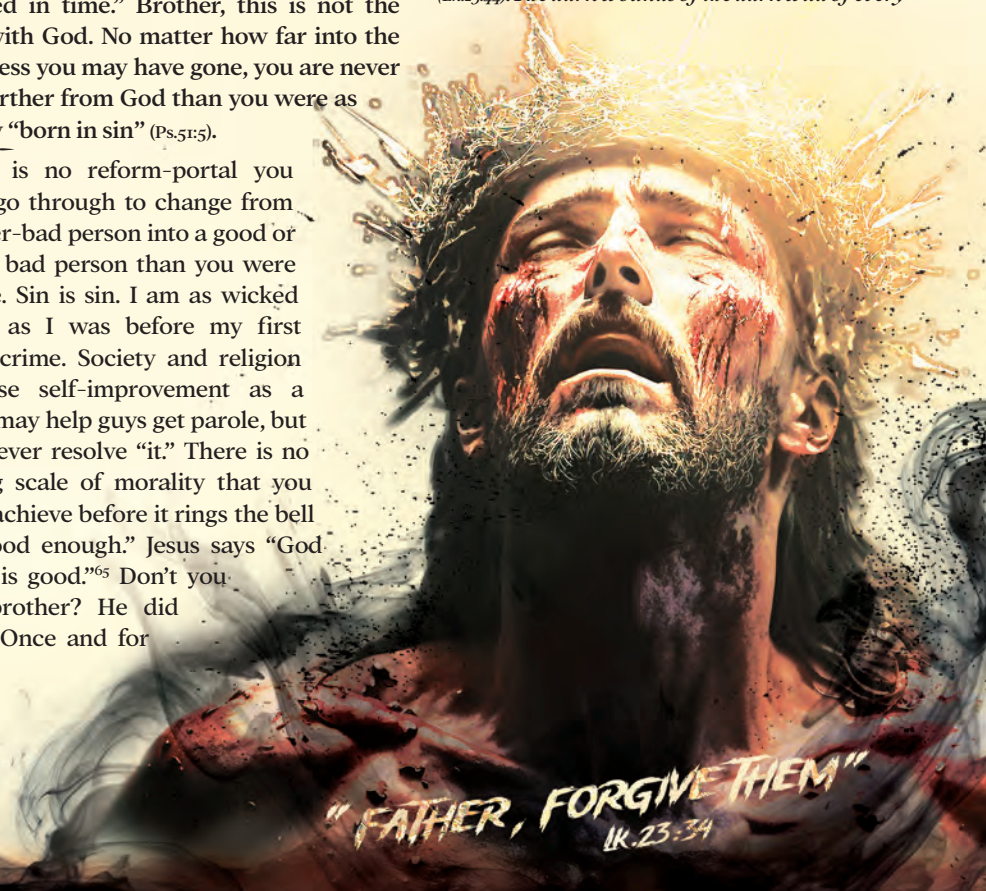
WANTED

He does not want you to be better. He wants YOU. He sees through the "bad" image, knowing what He can do within you. If you turn in the "outlaw", you'll receive the reward. Jesus does not hesitate to get down on the ground to wash your feet, like He did to the brothers back then.⁷⁷ He protected the lady condemned by the religionists (Jn.8:2-11). He lifts up the most vile gang-banger, to look in his face and say "You are WANTED... by Me. Let me turn your mind space into My place."⁶⁹

"DARK THOUGHTS, NO MATTER HOW DARK, DON'T MAKE YOU MORE DARK OR FARTHER FROM GOD."

Brother, in all the hours you spend feeling screwed and helpless, could you maybe take five minutes to stop it and exert an ounce of faith? Defy that damn status quo of prison culture. I mean, it's absurd to think you must fix yourself and your own past. That would mean that your nature, and events which are impossible to change, would leave you forever screwed. Sin will spin a thousand webs of lies. You can't possibly out-think it unless you access the mind of God (1Cor.2:16). Think about it. What's in you is ten thousand years old. It's an ancient thing lurking inside every one of us today. This problem needs the remedy far beyond humanity:

In becoming man, Jesus bound Himself to our wicked nemesis so "it" couldn't escape.^{47/52} He carried it in Himself to the cross to kill this sucker once and for all time. Darkness fell over the earth (Lk.23:44). The dark wounds of the dark wild of every



"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM"
Lk. 23:34

THE ACE OF SPADES



The 1800's were epic. While 140,000 pioneers crossed the Oregon trail, the Gold Rush lasted 18 months, and Lincoln fought the Civil War. The Wild West gave birth to many fantastic inventions. All except for one... barbed wire, which made Joseph Glidden the richest man in America because it enabled settlers to move west and mark the boundry of the land they claimed.

Another creation was the Pony Express, which ran from Missouri to California in 1860. Men like Buffalo Bill Cody and Wild Bill Hickok had to weigh less than 125 lb. to ride, and started as young as 14. They faced exhaustion, danger, wild animals, and indian attacks, delivering over 30,000 letters, in 18 months. But it came to an end at the invention of the telegraph.

Men crave long-distance messaging with each other. How about God? I mean, it's only a step beyond talking to yourself. And everybody does that. A sigh, whisper, groan. Don't matter the words, just your unique expression. Otherwise known as prayer. Guys tell me they've never heard a "tapping" from God. I say "Yes, you have, bro. All day long, He's messaging. But you don't sit still to listen. You're too busy." Bro, prayer is your Ace of Spades that can win every hand. God'll play cards with you if you come to the table. Faith starts out as a kind of 'make believe', but once He answers, you think like "Whoa!"¹⁵

Thousands of messages are waiting for you, brother. I can't afford a 'divine phone' so I do what all men do. I come face to face with Him in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is waiting to open our terrible dull ears. Listen. You can always know God's voice because He is always edifying. He may speak through a mouse or a storm. Through a friend or an enemy. He always speaks through the Scriptures. All day long He communicates long distance messages. Faith comes by hearing (Rom.10:17).

person, in every generation, fell upon His heart and etched the lines on His face. The Father showed us our human depravity by what we did to Jesus. Yet, at the same time, He showed us His heart toward us, despite our depravity. The plan was for Jesus to stretch out His arms wide-open and to be nailed down in that position, as if a snapshot in time for every outlaw to see. And this is exactly what He did. Fulfilled the Law. Once for all. "He who knew no darkness became darkness that we might be right before God."^{19/12} He now welcomes us in with His unconditional love.¹⁸

In the western flick, Open Range, there is a scene where Kevin Costner boldly walks up, face to face, and drops his nemesis at point blank range, like David did to Goliath. This is what Jesus did to sin. ^{58/66} Nothing more beautiful than the fearless God-Man in a defiant stand against evil. Satan realized, after the resurrection, that Jesus obliterated his ancient and only power over mankind: sin - darkness (Jn.11:25/Heb.2:14/Rev.1:8).

"THAT'S JUST MY GAME."

-VAL KILMER, TOMBSTONE

80,000 brothers in "The Hole." No distractions like you had on the outside to help you avoid facing that dark wild. Society denies that sin exists, yet clearly recognizes that isolating a man in his own darkness is the most severe punishment. Brother, you can beat the hole. One day soon, all distractions will be taken away and everyone will face the beast within. So why

not face it now, when you can do something about it?

Jesus went to the actual hole of hell itself (1Peter 3:19). The absolute darkness of sin isolated Him from His Father, making His agony the worst in all history.¹²⁰ He surely did not endure all this to now nitpick over your human failures. Rather, He can now get inside our sinful nature, by His Spirit, to heal the deepest hurt, and introduce eternal light.⁶⁶ *He can end the nightmares and anguish.* Like a ten ton boulder outweighs a feather, so His light is superior to darkness

(2 Cor.4:6).

HE DIED AS THE GOOD, FOR THE BAD AND THE UGLY. HE IS THE LIGHT THAT OBLITERATES THE DARKNESS.

DEFIANT HOPE

Brother, you've been standing in the cold dark wilderness. I've been working to move the obstacles and help you build a path to a new frontier. Behold, here is a place to walk. Humility is a different kind of swagger. A beam of warm sunlight is breaking through the forest trees upon you. All you have to do is angle your mind to move further into the light where things start to become dimensional. You've done a hundred movements for dark. Now move for light. You know what that movement is. And only you know.

Think about it, what good has bad ever given you?³⁴ If you think things can't get worse, they can get far worse. One day in the future you might look back on this moment and wish you would have done what you can do right now. You can change your future in the present. The fight for your soul has just begun. It's all that matters. When God is on your side, nothing can possibly contend with eternal life.¹⁰⁶

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY."

BILLY THE KID, YOUNG GUNS

As an outlaw, when we are told "You can't be dark," we respond, "Oh, yes I can. Watch me." We love a dare. So here's the ultimate... I dare you: defy the familiar voice of ego that says, "NO. You can't touch the Light." Dare to say, "Yes, I can. Watch me."

Refuse to play the victim. Use your hostile surroundings to forge a will of high-grade steel, not common plastic. Become an extraordinary outcast who accepts reality, rejects self-pity, and executes defiant hope.

It don't matter how much you fall and fail,

JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. HE WHO FOLLOWS ME WILL NOT WALK IN THE DARKNESS, BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE" (JN.8:12).

"IT'S NOT DYING I'M TALKING ABOUT, IT'S LIVING."

ROBERT DUVALL -LONESOME DOVE

only that you rise again (Phil.3:13). Set a face so as to shatter the atmosphere of those who traffic in the endless chatter of criticism and despair. As fast as you can say Jesse James, you can put 5 letters together in your head, drop them into your heart, and call upon His name with your mouth, "Jesus".



As I laid on the grass in a remote California field, I stared up at the flight pattern of ten ravens soaring in the sky above. My soul was troubled and sorely grieved by inexplicable depression. In and out, the ravens flew, as if designated pilots on a mission to draw me higher. In mid-flight, I watched as several fluttered in place, then suddenly, switched directions and caught the wind in the opposite flow. Wow. That's God. It was magnificent. They glided in a pattern, making their unique and beautiful sounds, as if talking to me while weaving in amazing symmetry. Such an event with no crowds to marvel.

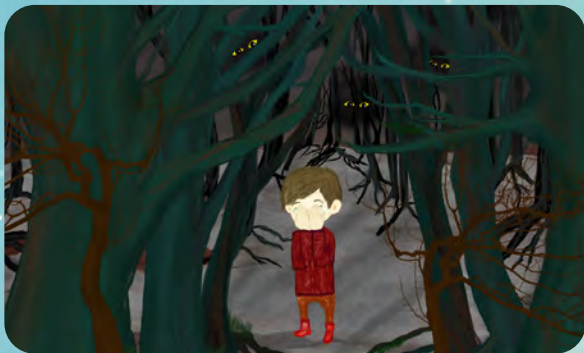
I contemplated where Jesus says, "Do not worry... consider the ravens..." (Lk.12:22-24). *Could He be sharing with us His key to finding the solution to His own unbearable tragedy?* What if Jesus Himself was laying on His back, in the stillness of a moment, looking skyward, and saw a raven? There and then, this "insignificant" bird drew this God-Man to contemplate the answer of His Father to His Own Personal agony. It wasn't about some morsel of knowledge, but the Father's very Presence. He requires everything in you to back down, shutdown, redirect your focus and energy, and only then to find His peace. Not a passive acquiescence but another dimension of life. He requires something so simple, our nature of anxiety causes us to miss it.

In that moment, I beheld High Places. I gave yield to the breeze of the wind as divine. I relinquished myself to Him. I believed. I spoke no words but heard many. I said no formal prayer but felt many answered within. I let go and found me. Ahhh. My regenerated spirit was quickened; who I really am beyond my sinful nature. I arrived in that field bummed out, but left uplifted. Like Elijah, the ravens "fed" me (1Kings 17:6).

Since then I have adopted the nickname "Raven," as you have seen mentioned by name in this magazine. Now, you know the story.

STERLING NORTH & THE FIREFLY

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY RUTH MERCY



STERLING NORTH WAS LOST IN A DARK, SCARY PLACE,
WITH LOTS OF MONSTERS HE DID NOT WANT TO FACE.
TERRIBLE NOISES THAT MADE HIM AFRAID,
AND ANY HOPE TO GET OUT WOULD QUICKLY FADE.

HE TRIED TO BE STRONG, BRAVE, AND TOUGH,
BUT HE WAS JUST A LITTLE BOY WHO'D HAD ENOUGH.
ONE DAY HE SAID, "FATHER, IF YOU'RE UP THERE, PLEASE COME FIND ME!
HELP ME CONQUER THE MONSTERS BEHIND ME."

AND THERE AND THEN IN THE VERY DARK NIGHT,
THE FATHER SENT STERLING A SPECIAL LIGHT.
OUT OF NOWHERE, A LITTLE FIREFLY CAME,
SHE WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL AND STERLING ASKED HER NAME.



SHE SAID, "I AM ANN IDEA AND I BELONG ONLY TO YOU,
WHAT NO ONE ELSE HAS THOUGHT OF, TOGETHER WE CAN DO."

"YOU SEE, THERE'S A SONG OUT THERE LOOKING FOR A VOICE TO SING IT,
A HOPE JUST WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO BRING IT.
BEAUTIFUL WORDS THAT NEED SOMEONE TO WRITE THEM,
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS THAT NEED SOMEONE TO FIGHT THEM.

A NEW CREATIVITY THAT COULD UNLOCK CLOSED DOORS.
"I AM ANN IDEA" AND I AM ALL YOURS.
WE WILL THINK OF SOMETHING THAT NO ONE ELSE COULD.
IN THIS CREEPY BAD PLACE, WE WILL BRING THE GOOD."
SO WHEN THE FOREST IS DARK AND YOU KIND OF WANT TO CRY,
LOOK UP, THE FATHER WILL SEND YOU ANN IDEA, A BEAUTIFUL FIREFLY.



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Mayhem At The Diner

By David

The first restaurant job I ever had was at a diner. For legal reasons, I can't say the name, but let's just say, it rhymes with Benny's. And it was the world's busiest 'Benny's', right on the Las Vegas Strip. We were open 24hrs, so you had people who hadn't slept and those who just woke up. It was absolute mayhem. Often, my coworkers wouldn't show up, just MIA. Some we'd see again in a few days, some never came back (can't blame 'em). So we usually ended up very short-staffed. Run, David, Run.

If you don't know much about Benny's, it's the breakfast place that smells like wet carpet, cigarettes, and burnt coffee. We are the lowest form of an establishment that can still legally sell food. We have a motto, "If your shoes don't stick to the floor, it ain't Benny's". And also, "Benny's. That's disgusting!" It's like Waffle House, but not that fancy.

I still have flashbacks of working there. I have to get up in the middle of the night and check my shoes to make sure they're not sticky. I feel like I'm sharing to an AA support group. My name is David, and I'm a recovering Benny's Employee. I've been syrup-free for around 3 years now. My coin is a crusty pancake.

I worked as a server and sometimes ran the expo window. I was excited to have such a job because now I could 'one up' my older brother, who thought he had the craziest first job at Chuck E. Cheese where he dressed in a giant rat costume, cleaned baby snot out of the tubes, and picked up dirty diapers the moms would stash in the bushes outside the restaurant (true story). But he had nothing on me now. Amateur. This is the big leagues.

This one time, we had like 10 entrees in the kitchen window. Tickets didn't stop printing out of the machine. We were just waiting on short stacks. (that's insider code for two pancakes. A tall stack is four pancakes). One of the cooks was MIA. So I popped back into the kitchen and started cooking pancakes. Did I know how? I did not. But I had courage. I felt like a gladiator entering the ring in slow motion as I put on the hairnet and picked up a spatula. Go time. As I was waiting for them to finish, two large cockroaches fell from the ceiling panels and landed on the floor. The manager and I just looked at each other, paused, shrugged, squashed, and then kicked them into the drain. We called out, "Four short stacks coming up!" and kept going (all true). Poor lil' fellas, their mom probably wondered why they never came home.

I worked a night shift, and was shocked when I found out we sold steak. Huh? Who orders a steak at Benny's? You never hear someone say, "Oh, my gosh, I had the most amazing steak at Benny's last night. Paired with a glass of apple juice, tutti frutti syrup, and chocolate chips. Oooooe". But yes, we had a freezer full of steak,

and yet, only sell one steak a month. So, you know how light years work? A star is so far away, the light takes four years to travel to us. So the light you're seeing now is actually what the star looked like four years ago. In the same way, in Benny's time, the steak you're eating is actually from 7 years ago.

I once served this guy his steak, and it was such a weird conversation because there were no questions. We were just like speaking statements to each other.

He said, "This steak is bad." I said, "Yes, it is." He said, "I cannot eat this." I said, "There are few who can." He said, "Please help me." I said, "I'm sorry, it's too late for you." He said, "I understand, thank you." I said, "Please still tip me well." He said, "That will be the last thing I do." I said, "Yes, it probably will be. Goodbye." And I gave him his bill.

Seriously, one of the hardest parts was the daily fork hunt. They somehow disappeared. Plates and cups, too. I think people stole them for souvenirs. Which is weird, because who would want to remember this experience? As servers, we'd have to grab extra forks when we could, wash 'em, and hide em in our aprons. Sometimes, when we'd run out, I felt like asking a guest "Excuse me, sir, could you hurry up with that fork? Be a little considerate. Other guests wanna eat too, you know?"



The Burrito Burglar

One morning, when we were packed, I watched as a homeless man who had come in to take a shower in our bathrooms (quite common), walked out of the restaurant. On his way out, he just reached over and casually snatched a breakfast burrito off of a guest's plate in-between their bites. Hmm. I didn't think that was going to happen, but here we are. The guest looked at me like "do something." But what was I supposed to do (other than respect the burglar for his audacity)? Ask him for his autograph? I mean, ask him to put it back? Did the guest want it back? "Cuz, our cook, Derrick, who made it, hasn't bathed in weeks. So... uh. In fact, one of our managers sleeps in his car, in the parking lot sometimes. I hadn't washed my uniform in about a month. We're all in this together, my dude. Enjoy it, big guy. "Derrick, fire up another burrito on the fly. No roaches." This would not be the only time this bandito did this. Became known as the Burrito Burglar. Still a legend around those parts I hear.



The Italian Job

-Michael

As a young kid, crashing weddings was my first love, mainly because of the 'free' homemade Kielbasa. But this Polack from the west side needed to move on to bigger and better challenges. So, in the last frame of a 3 man bowling tournament, our minds were not at all on bowling, but on our idiot plan to steal the bowling... shoes. Like the Italian job, but instead of gold, cheap shoes, and instead of a master plan, we would literally just run fast.

I glanced over at the check-in counter. It hit me. "We're screwed!" The old, incapacitated grandma was now being replaced by a giant, mean-looking dude. "That is one very, very big guy," my buddy muttered. "Ya. He looks like a human refrigerator. And I bet he can run very fast," the other said. Hmmm. Suddenly, the EXIT sign was like a mile away. Courage, Michael, you can do this.

"Let's just forget it," Lenny insisted. "No way. This is our chance to prove our mettle. Who knows what someday we could steal?" I had such quality friends. "Really? Sneaking out bowling shoes means we have a future in crime?"

I bolted for the doors in a mad dash down the street. The guy was indeed fast and there was no grip on my bowling shoes. But I was a champ and my 4.4 football speed gave me a clear advantage. Ha ha! He chased me to an alley in which I hid. Ninja mode activated. I could see him turn in my direction, but he never saw me. I was good. Real good. Those shoes sat on my shelf like a trophy.

Brain Puzzle

How much is each food item worth?

2 glasses of juice	\$18	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?
1 glass of juice	\$23	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?
1 glass of juice	\$13	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?
1 glass of juice	\$14	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?
1 glass of juice	\$20	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?
1 glass of juice	\$17	1 burrito	1 pancake	1 cup of coffee	1 chocolate chip	1 egg	1 slice of pizza	1 glass of juice	= ?

Write your answers on a separate paper and check them on Pg. 48



One time, I stuck gum to the outside of an airplane, when I arrived, it was still there. I was so proud of myself.

Comedy Challenge

Everybody has a funny story. What's yours? How about your cellmates? Pick a night each week or month when you can get together and do a small comedy group. Each person take a turn telling their funny stories. Each time it will grow more and more. Twist: Some people tell true funny stories (like all the ones above), and some people make them up, at the end the audience has to guess if it was true or fake to win points. First one to 10 wins.

One time, I exploded a can of Great Stuff Expanding spray foam in the lobby of a fancy hotel. It went everywhere.





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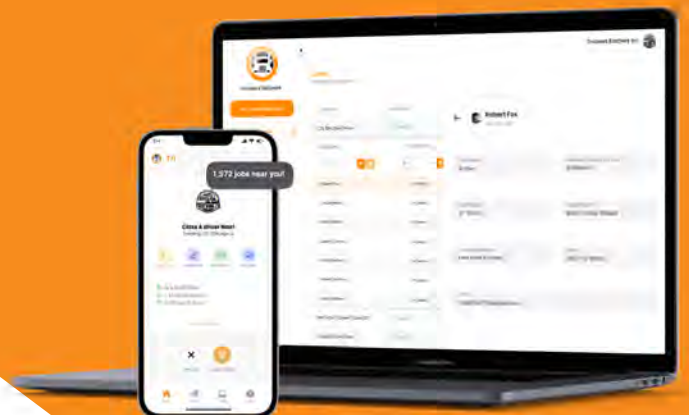
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SEEING THROUGH MY TIME



Damien Steele was serving 25 years at Bethonsonville State Correctional Facility. Like a broken record, every day Damien's mind fell on two simple words:... "if only." It was day 632 of thinking the same thing... "If only I could change my past. If only I didn't do that one stupid thing. If only. Then, I'd be happy. I'd be free. I'd be me. Not this shell of a man stuck in this hellhole. If only..." The deep pit of his pain whirled within. Everyone knew, that if you talked to Damien, you were gonna hear this same sad song on repeat. A one-hit wonder called 'I Almost Didn't But I Did'.

One day, a huge thunderstorm closed the yard early. Lightening hit a nearby power line and everyone was distracted. I heard this bizarre sound and turned back to the yard. I couldn't believe my eyes. Something that looked like a time portal had appeared near the basketball court. "What the...?!" I thought it was some kind of hallucination, brought on by the oil-soaked hot dogs I'd eaten for lunch, but, no... this was real.

In a split second, I knew this was the opportunity of a lifetime. I walked up to the keypad and punched in the exact date, time, hour, and minute of my crime and jumped in. Shwoomp! *Back to the moment I lost it all. The moment when I got in that car with my stupid, double-crossing, idiot friends, the moment when I was so out of control I would do the unthinkable. I had to undo what I did.*

Sure enough, I arrived. I watched from the bushes and saw my younger self standing on the porch, getting pumped up. A shell of a man desperate for a thrill. He was riding high on impulse, like a surfer on a 40' wave, adrenaline flowing through his veins. Who knew where it would end? I wanted to scream, "Stop! Please, stop. Just stop. I beg you, just think." Slap him. Hug him. Anything. But I knew I would never convince my younger self not to do what he was about to do. He was too stubborn. So, I snuck in the back door, found the gun in the dresser, and took out the clip before he came in and grabbed it.

His friends drove up... He jumped in the car and they went to the bank, the teller went for something under the counter... the moment came and click... click... click. The gun didn't fire. He was shocked and I was thrilled. He didn't get the money, but he got home. He wept as he realized

what had almost happened. I wept too, in relief, as his 'friends' drove off down that dusty road. "I did it! It's over," I sighed.

'Now, let me go to the future. Let me see this new life I have just won,' I thought as jumped back through the time machine into the future. To my surprise, I landed in the exact same spot in the bushes again. "I really hope there is no poison ivy in here," I chuckled to myself, a bit giddy.

I'd always had a dream that I'd move out to somewhere amazing but... nope. It was the same house, same lot. Just more junk laying all over. I had a thing for junk. I wandered over to take a look. It was good junk. Even an old boat to fix up. 'Good job me,' I thought. There were toys scattered around, too. And a woman I used to know, from a diner in town, was now standing on the porch smoking. *'Wait... that must be my wife. I always did like her.'*

I got closer and looked through the windows of the house. There he was, the future me, sitting on the couch. He was not in prison. I almost screamed with joy. I watched children playing on the floor, drawing with crayons on the carpet. A teenager was in another room. The TV was on as I heard the woman yell something angrily from the porch. The Damien on the couch sighed and muttered something quietly, then said loudly, "Yeah, fine!" I watched through the windows for hours. I was trying to be excited. When I returned to the present, this would be my life. It was the life I had been dreaming about all those nights in prison. Or... was it?

As I watched, I could see something in his face and hear it in his tone; that same empty void I had inside. The hollow shell. The 'magical family' in

my dreams looked like this, but wasn't this. This wasn't all I'd thought it would be. This was just five selfish people trying to live together. *'Why was I just endlessly watching TV, hiding from the family I so desperately wanted?'* I thought. *'It's all wrong. There is something missing.'* It suddenly dawned on me: *I'd changed my past, but I'd never changed. I'd stopped acting out of control, and did good stuff instead of bad stuff, but I was the same empty man inside. I was miserable.*

Suddenly, a loud voice startled me, "Those hot dogs really did you in, eh? I call 'em heartburn band-grenades. Come on, we gotta go in." My cellmate boomed as I awoke from a deep sleep, laying on the table in the yard. It took me some time to come to. No way that was a dream...or was it? It was too real.

The next day, sitting in the prison cafeteria, one of the guys yelled out, "What are you thinking about, Damien?" Everyone laughed because they all knew what I was thinking about. To everyone's shock, including my own, I said, *"How happy I am."* Dead silence. *"I'm happy because I took a time machine back to my past, changed my crime, got the good life I thought I wanted, and realized I was just as empty inside."*

So, now, I don't have to sit here stewing about some dream life that doesn't even exist. Even if I had walked a different road, I'd have taken my same self with me. So, sure, I'd rather be out there. And sure, I deeply regret what I did, always will. But I'm happy that I don't have to live my whole life as a deadbeat shell of man. I can change. It's not that hard. Look, I'm doing it right now."

Boom goes the dynamite. I didn't know if they'd know what I was talking about, but they did. They felt the power in my words because it rang true in my face. A light was lit behind my eyes. I had made a decision to stop sulking and start living. Yep, even at Bethonsonville State Correctional.

My friend caught up to me in the corridor and asked, "Are you on something, bro? I'm worried about you." I responded, "No, man. I found something better: Perspective. I saw through my time. I saw how I can change it by changin' who I am, here and now. I realized I was feeding the monster of my regret and it was eating me alive.

I had a dream, but it felt so real. I saw my face on the outside and realized I don't wanna be that man either. Whether in here or out there doesn't matter as much as who I am."

I could see that my friend was looking down, struck by my words, but wasn't ready to let go of his own regret. So I said, "I know sulking feels good, brother, but it steals our days and leaves us nothing in return but misery." My friend replied, *"I agree, man. But I wasn't sulking at this exact moment, probably will later. Right now, I was looking at that nasty rash on your ankle, you should get that taken care of. It looks like poison ivy."*

BEYOND THE DEAD END

- A POETIC LITERARY EXPERIENCE BY ELIZABETH FAITH SHALOM



THE TOSSING IN TURMOIL

You are being chased on foot. It is a matter of life or death. Your pursuers are getting closer and closer. You are running so fast, you can't catch your breath. It feels like your heart will beat out of your chest. There is no place to hide, so you keep on running. The road just winds. Then all of a sudden, you hit a dead end. There is nowhere to go. Your thoughts run rampant, you feel that sense of panic. You realize there is no way out! You want to scream, you want to shout. In every direction you look, you are surrounded by walls. Suddenly you find yourself feeling so small. You are cornered. You are trapped. There is no way back. You can't go through. You can't go around. Is there no escape left to be found? ...These are the moments in time when light grows dim, feeling wrapped tight, like you can't let

anything in. Linger, like shadows and smoke, are the daunting groans of a fading hope. The clenching of a fist with nothing left to hit. The festering hatred, the accusation that life is what you made of it. The anguish of being berated by a mindless assault, the lies that define it was all your fault. Whirling in the rage of an unpredicted betrayal, the inner bewilderment of being wrongfully labeled. The tossing in turmoil, the mental impact of a sub-conscience recoil. The stabbing wound from when someone turned their back on you. Doubling down like a heavy doom is the despair that afflicts, there is nothing left inside of you. Like winding up the weave of sinuous stairs, gasping for relief, but the way is impaired. So much grief remains unexplained and makes you feel disengaged, but

believe me, bro, you are not crazy... you are not crazy... "I am not crazy."

Breathe deep. It is in this place, my dear brother, where there is waiting for you a Comrade-in-arms. He understands you more than you can fathom and cares beyond even what you might imagine. He knows the true you and doesn't ask for any proof. This is the Brother like no other; Who knows specifically what to do. For He too has faced His dead end...

Have you ever talked to a prisoner who was forced to drink vinegar? Have you ever met a man who had a nail pounded through his hand? Have you had a close friend whose forehead was torn because he had worn a crown of thorns?

NO ONE COULD HAVE IMAGINED...

They said He was a madman and completely insane, but the look on His face said... "I am not crazy." "I am not crazy..."

There was Jesus sitting in the dark, alone in a garden, in His heart He searched for other options. The mental dilemma was like someone had punched Him in the gut, He wiped His brow, His sweat had turned to blood. The awareness of what was about to happen gave birth to an agony He never before imagined. The clamor of guards in full force was coming, all His friends went fearfully running. There was nowhere to go. He had been wrongfully accused and betrayed, a mob with torches, clubs, and spears came to take Him away.

They sentenced Him to death by torture, everyone left Him alone, to the whips of horror. Jesus held onto the hope for one last miracle, something unpredictable. He searched the heavens for His Father, but He was not found. "Why have you forsaken me?"¹²⁰ He cried aloud. There was no answer. No miracle. He was left to suffer as One despicable. He found Himself grabbed by the cold hand of callous, dragged through the mud of slander and malice. Ravaging lions, who were enraged by His silence. Savage chanting, abandoned to the insanity of madness laughing. His name defamed, His reputation smeared in shame. Taunted by mockery. Hunted by hypocrisy.

Criminally defined, egregiously maligned. Trapped by the daunting walls of cruelty, betrayal, hatred and false accusations, the lies that no one cared and no one could save Him. Any mercy refused on this God-forsaken day when all hell broke loose.¹¹⁸

Jesus persisted with the choice to forgive us... He chose to undergo the worst of it, picking up the cross, gripping it in His fist, in complete innocence... Jesus uttered the words so valiant, that no one could have fathomed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Lk.23:34). My brother, something happened. It is here where Jesus created the Door for you, the way out.. the total escape route. There in the dead end, He said... mercy, not revenge.

THROUGH THE DOOR

He was smitten by the world's injustice for us, bearing the penalty for our crimes and our felonies... so you can say, "I will choose to forgive all of my enemies."⁹² Since He took on this torture in your stead, you say, "I will give those who hurt me, mercy, not revenge". Now, you look a little closer, you are shocked, there in your dead end appears a Door unlocked. You follow in His steps, you move ahead in compassion with no regrets. All those unjust offenses they did against you, you decide to forget. As you keep walking your heart begins to reach, it is through this door you discover all that you seek. You are free from the corruption

of injustice and all its twists because you choose the riches in giving others forgiveness. Here now, you come into this realm where true light reigns supreme, the wind breathes calm to mend all broken seams. You are encompassed by the comfort of complete relief. Slowly lifting is the fog of memories past, a desire for the future emerges like an inviting forest path, granting you a concrete hope that nothing could surpass. You can now expand beyond all boundaries, limits and walls, you speak strong, you stand tall. Your eyes are acclimated to see a clear and elevated view, you realize now, there is so much inside of you!

In every direction your mind is lifted above, you know that you are understood, you know that you are loved. Can you look to the heavens, and extend into new horizons where you haven't been? For your every question is answered by the Voice speaking to you within. Here, you gain perspective, you are attentive. You listen closely, you open your hand to engage the lowly. You perceive things that you never before imagined, your thoughts take you bounding over the farthest of chasms. Your burdens are released for you are content deep within your core, and all your moments are redeemed because you found the way inside the Door!

ESCAPE

My dear brother, there is a dead end, not down some ghetto street in the Bronx, but the dead end that we all come to inside of ourselves. I have sat and listened to the in-depth stories of numerous men who have experienced mind shattering trauma and inconceivable injustice. Thoughts of the past, the trial, the judge, the prosecutor, the jury, the evidence, the witnesses, the D.A., everything leading you down the back alleys inside. Some guys tell me that when they have come to this dead end they thought about revenge, drugs, crime, violence, or worse to escape their inner turmoil. But they realize that all these roads lead further into darkness.

My friend, I have stood for Jesus throughout the cities, towns, favelas, ghettos, and the darkest and dirtiest streets of this world. For His sake, I have suffered the tremendous pain of persecution, betrayal, discrimination, intense rejection and many complex issues that have no explanation nor resolution.¹⁰⁷ I, too, understand the deep mental anguish of feeling like you hit a wall and it seems like there is no way out. But there is.

You may not realize this, but guys like Joseph, Job, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, and other righteous men and women, were ordinary and simple people like us. They found themselves immersed in this same complex and confusing turmoil of unjust suffering. They dealt with situations in life that were debilitating, devastating, and unresolved. They dared to argue with God about the injustice they faced. They sought Him for vindication and resolution.

"WHY DOES THE JUSTICE DUE ME ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF GOD?" - "I SHOUT FOR HELP, BUT THERE IS NO JUSTICE." (IS.40:27/JOB 19:7)

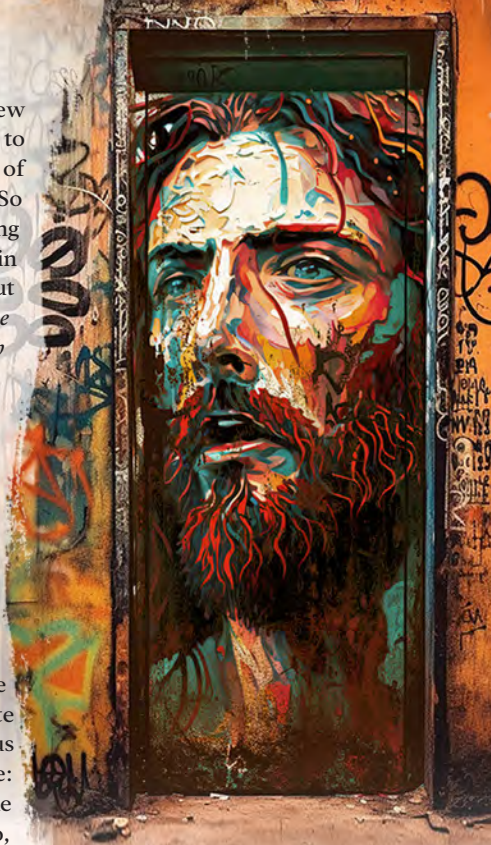
He did not eliminate the complexities of their pain, but showed them another way that forced them to expand their character.¹⁰² Jeremiah never expected that God's answer to his suffering would summon him into a higher perspective (Jer.12:1-5). *This type of dealing is essential.*¹⁰⁹

Jesus cried out... "Father, take this from me... but not My will be done but Yours." (Mark 14:36) In this decision of surrender He gave us the ultimate solution.⁴³ He demonstrated that it was not about 'fixing' man's injustice, but rather choosing to submit to the

Father's justice. He knew that vengeance belongs to God, and that the plan of His justice is perfect.¹²⁶ So Jesus entrusted everything into the Father's hands in order to create the way out for us. He says, *"I am the Door...come...enter through me...you will find rest..."*

(Jn.10:9/Matt.11:28).

Jesus is there, in your worst anguish, brother. He calls your name and reaches out to pull you in. He knows exactly what is going on. He says, look, bro, "Let me show you the way..." Think about it, Jesus got what He didn't deserve: complete injustice. And He gave us what we don't deserve: complete forgiveness. The Just... for the unjust.⁴⁵ So, the door out of the dead end is to go beyond yourself and surrender your case to the Father.⁸⁸ Give to your enemies what they don't deserve, what Jesus gave to you... forgiveness without measure... and you will open the Door of freedom into invaluable treasures.^{66/89/90/92}



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LOST DREAMS

-Michael



Let's talk about how you feel you really screwed up your life and it can never be fixed. Bear with me. I can't tell you how much I loved playing football. I mean it was far more than a sport. I was obsessed. It was my life.

Hitting the hole with all my speed and making a cut was the ultimate rush. But I lost my dreams when severe, repeated injuries left me riding the bench. I played here and there, but it did nothing to satisfy my passion.

I always led with my head which gave me a reputation as mean and tough. One day, I hit a guy so hard with my head that it knocked me unconscious, although I was still walking around in uniform on my feet. I yelled out "Who put me in this costume?" I had no clue what was going on. It scared me. I completely blanked out. Everybody freaked out. It took a while to come around. But that was only one of many, many hits I took to the head. I had severe headaches so bad I'd hide my tears, yet continue to practice hitting guys head on. It was agony. I told no one. Time passed and slowly, one injury after another, all that I worked so hard to gain vanished. My dream was crushed.

After almost 20 years of carrying that deep regret and grief, I began to see something I never saw before. Long story short, God saved my brain. No doubt, if I had started, I would be in bad shape today and would not be writing this to you. How do I know for sure? 'Cuz the poor soul who played in front of me became a mental mess.

Now, I know this is nothing compared to your situation. But what I'm saying to you, brother, is maybe you haven't yet seen His purpose. You don't know the specifics, but you can know that God is so great and grand that whatever happened in the past, He can turn it around.¹⁰⁶ He will use it not only for your protection, but for all involved, to reach the greatest destiny possible. Today, I greatly rejoice for every one of those injuries.

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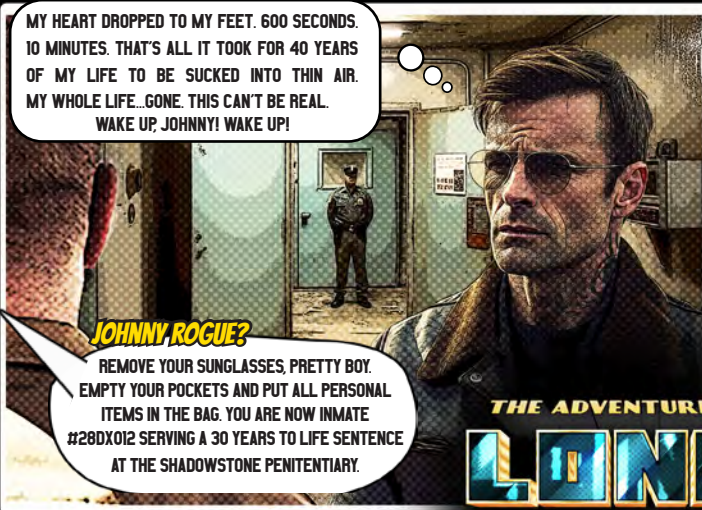
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*In Business For Over
30 Years*

MY HEART DROPPED TO MY FEET. 600 SECONDS. 10 MINUTES. THAT'S ALL IT TOOK FOR 40 YEARS OF MY LIFE TO BE SUCKED INTO THIN AIR. MY WHOLE LIFE...GONE. THIS CAN'T BE REAL. WAKE UP, JOHNNY! WAKE UP!

JOHNNY ROGUE?

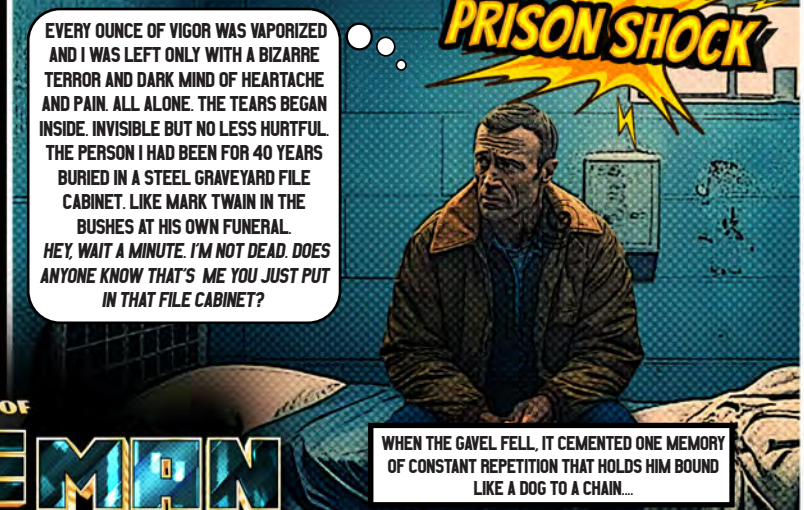
REMOVE YOUR SUNGLASSES, PRETTY BOY. EMPTY YOUR POCKETS AND PUT ALL PERSONAL ITEMS IN THE BAG. YOU ARE NOW INMATE #28DX012 SERVING A 30 YEARS TO LIFE SENTENCE AT THE SHADOWSTONE PENITENTIARY.



PRISON SHOCK

EVERY OUNCE OF VIGOR WAS VAPORIZED AND I WAS LEFT ONLY WITH A BIZARRE TERROR AND DARK MIND OF HEARTACHE AND PAIN. ALL ALONE. THE TEARS BEGAN INSIDE. INVISIBLE BUT NO LESS HURTFUL. THE PERSON I HAD BEEN FOR 40 YEARS BURIED IN A STEEL GRAVEYARD FILE CABINET. LIKE MARK TWAIN IN THE BUSHES AT HIS OWN FUNERAL. HEY, WAIT A MINUTE. I'M NOT DEAD. DOES ANYONE KNOW THAT'S ME YOU JUST PUT IN THAT FILE CABINET?

WHEN THE GAVEL FELL, IT CEMENTED ONE MEMORY OF CONSTANT REPETITION THAT HOLDS HIM BOUND LIKE A DOG TO A CHAIN...



THE ADVENTURES OF LONEMAN

VS THE BLACKOUT Issue 1

WE WERE SO IN LOVE... WE STOPPED FOR ICE CREAM. ALL LOVEY-DOVEY. THEN SHE BLEW UP WHICH WAS HER STYLE. SHE TOOK THE ICE CREAM AND SHOVED IT MY FACE, FLIPPED ME OFF, AND THEN DROVE AWAY. I FOLLOWED HER CAR AND CLIPPED THE BACK. SHE WENT OFF A CLIFF. I DIDN'T MEAN TO. OR I DID I? I COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT I HAD DONE... BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

IT WAS THE WICK THAT SET HIM OFF HE EXPLODED WITH RAGE, ROGUE RAGE. JOHNNY ROGUE RAGE.

CRASH!



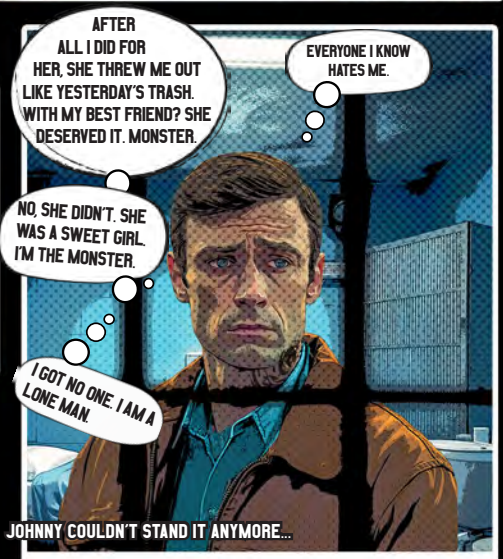
AFTER ALL I DID FOR HER, SHE THREW ME OUT LIKE YESTERDAY'S TRASH. WITH MY BEST FRIEND? SHE DESERVED IT. MONSTER.

NO, SHE DIDN'T. SHE WAS A SWEET GIRL. I'M THE MONSTER.

I GOT NO ONE. I AM A LONE MAN.

JOHNNY COULDN'T STAND IT ANYMORE...

EVERYONE I KNOW HATES ME.



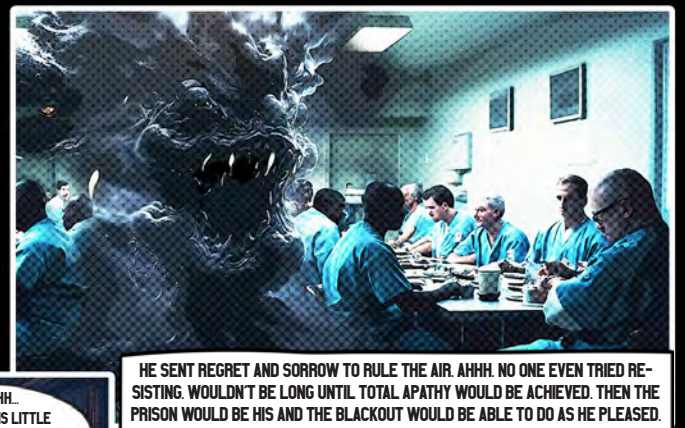
MEANWHILE...

THE BLACKOUT MOVED IN AND BEGAN TO SEIZE CONTROL OF SHADOWSTONE.

THE UNSPEAKABLE DARKNESS ENGULFED YET ANOTHER FACILITY HE WOULD SUCK ALL HOPE FROM THE AIR. HE IS THE FACE OF ANGER AND DESPAIR.



HE SENT REGRET AND SORROW TO RULE THE AIR. AHHH. NO ONE EVEN TRIED RESISTING. WOULDN'T BE LONG UNTIL TOTAL APATHY WOULD BE ACHIEVED. THEN THE PRISON WOULD BE HIS AND THE BLACKOUT WOULD BE ABLE TO DO AS HE PLEASED.



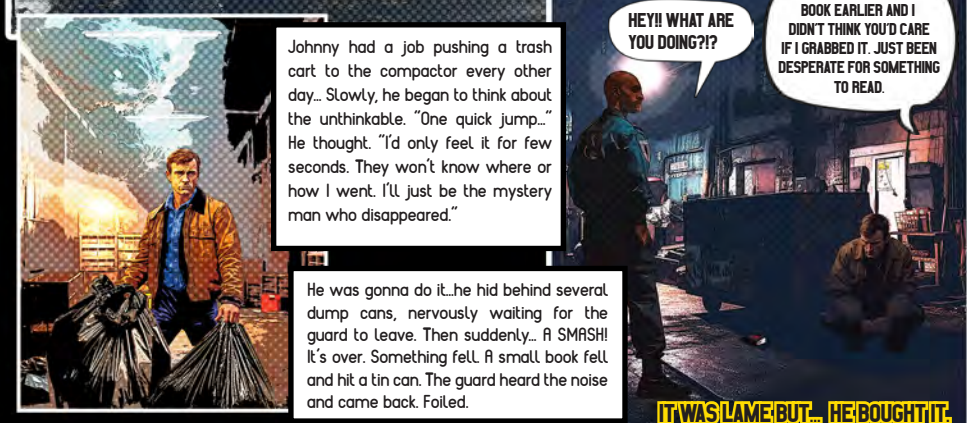
Johnny had a job pushing a trash cart to the compactor every other day... Slowly, he began to think about the unthinkable. "One quick jump..." He thought. "I'd only feel it for few seconds. They won't know where or how I went. I'll just be the mystery man who disappeared."

He was gonna do it...he hid behind several dump cans, nervously waiting for the guard to leave. Then suddenly... A SMASH! It's over. Something fell. A small book fell and hit a tin can. The guard heard the noise and came back. Foiled.

HEY!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!!

UHHH... I SAW THIS LITTLE BOOK EARLIER AND I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D CARE IF I GRABBED IT. JUST BEEN DESPERATE FOR SOMETHING TO READ.

IT WAS LAME BUT... HE BOUGHT IT.



As he escorted me back to my cell, I was hit by a thousand volts of WRKE UP. What in the hell was I just thinking? That couldn't have been me. But it was. Was I really going to...? How stupid could I be?! That is not an option. EVER. How could I think that? My life is precious. It was like my mind went from hell to heaven. It did a 360 in less than 630 seconds on a clock. It was Prison Shock in reverse. Haven't felt that giddy in 40 years. A rush of joy flooded my head. For the first time in my life, something I'd never before experienced: REALITY. Never had much for God, but hey, this incident lit my mind: If there is some sort of greater power, I had to tip my hat of thanks, if there is a 'big guy' upstairs. Crazy thing... a piece of trash saved a piece of trash. Ha.

LONEMAN IS BORN!



DOES THE SUPERNATURAL REALLY EXIST? CAN THIS OUTCAST BECOME EXTRAORDINARY?

Suddenly, I seized this radical moment and it began a thaw of that frozen moment in my brain. I began to think. What if...I shocked Prison Shock? What if I beat the system? My time in the past had no life to want to return to. It was all out hell. So why did I waste so much time wishing to return to it?

In a way, Johnny Rogue did disappear that night...or at least the old Rogue. Loneman was born (see bonus content page 42). I've never lived so much, in so little time. Something came upon me. Some kind of power. My head took on a process I could not stop. It became a CALCULATE-er. I was calculating, contemplating, and resolving, at warp speed. I didn't move an inch but traveled beyond my past, present and into, what I know now, is my future. I awoke a power within me... WILL POWER. It started pulsating from me.

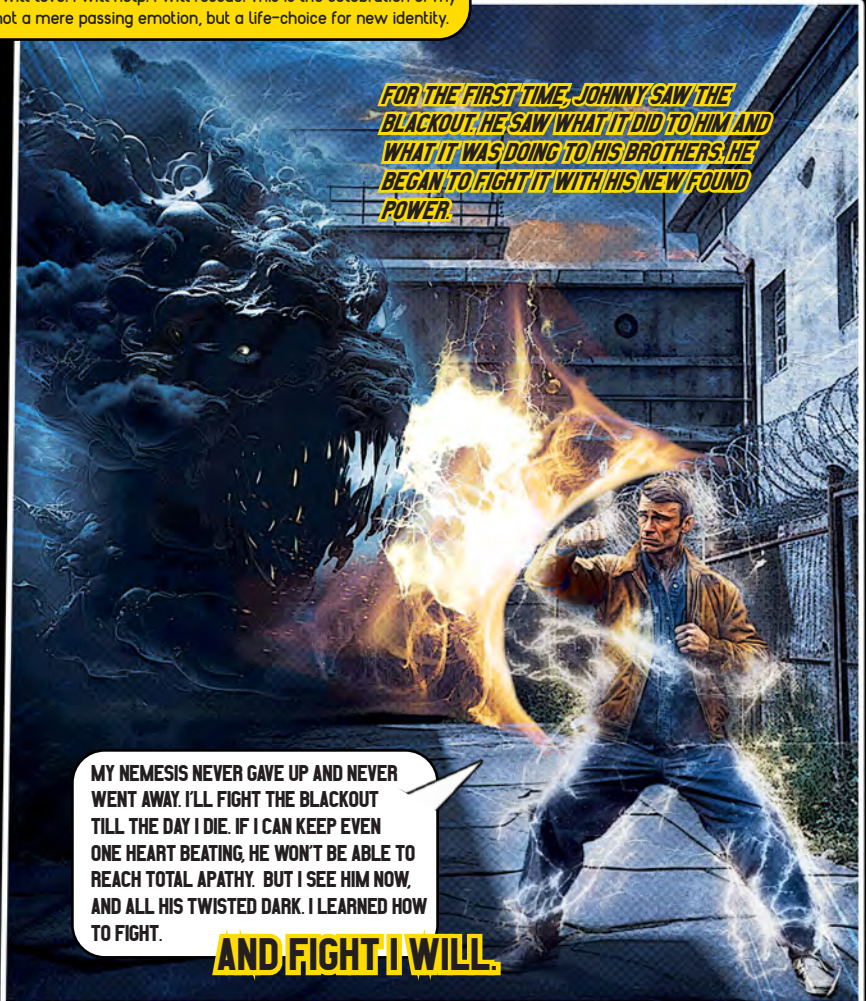
In this tangled mess of mental stress and indecisive men bent by impulse, I choose to be... resolute... set like a diamond to live... LONEMAN... I will totally and fully accept being alone. I will make this weakness, my strength. I'll quit wallowing and think of my brothers. They need me. I can give them what I have now been given... a second chance at life. I will love. I will help. I will rescue. This is the celebration of my power to decide. It is not a mere passing emotion, but a life-choice for new identity.

WOW!



AS LONEMAN, JOHNNY DIDN'T HAVE TO SIT IN SILENCE LISTENING TO THE ECHOES OF HIS LONELINESS. HE WAS FREE. SO HE BEGAN TO LISTEN TO THOSE AROUND HIM.

JOHNNY READ THE TRUE STORY OF A GUY WHO DID JUST THIS. HE TURNED THE WORLD ON ITS HEAD BY THIS KIND OF TEACHING TO PRE-THINK OUR INSTINCTS AND CREATE WITHIN OURSELVES A POSITIVE COUNTER TO OURSELVES. SOMEONE WHO OVERCAME THE SYSTEM BY REFUSING TO BE CAUGHT IN ITS CHAIN-REACTION OF PREDICTABILITY. SLAP FOR A SLAP? NO. TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. HATE FOR HATE? NO. LOVE FOR HATE. RETRIBUTION FOR BITTERNESS AND HURT? NO. FORGIVENESS. HE REVEALED HOW AN OUTCAST CAN BECOME A SOLDIER WITH AN ETERNAL CAUSE. JOHNNY DECLARED, "I CAN DO THAT. HOW? MY WILL. WHY? I CHOOSE. AND THIS IS A PHENOMENAL, SUPERNATURAL, UNIQUE, AND TREMENDOUS POWER."

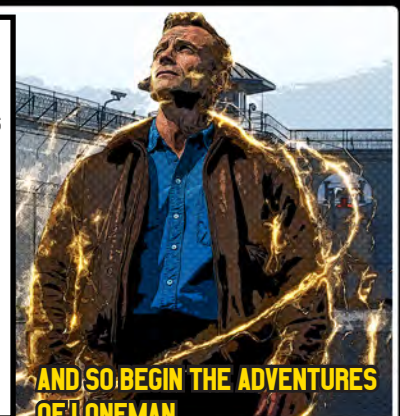


AND FIGHT I WILL.

Slowly, Johnny began to forget about himself all together. "I'm done being Mr. Macho. I escaped the trash compactor but not the cross. One required a coward. One requires a lion."



OH YA. IF YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT THAT LIL BOOK I FOUND IN THE TRASH. YA, I ATE IT. IT WAS DELICIOUS. IN FACT, IT WAS LIKE FRESH BAKED BREAD OF LIFE OUT OF THE OVEN. CAN'T BEAT IT. NOT BLACK LETTERS ON WHITE PAGES, OF LAWS AND LEGENDS, BUT A PAPER PORTAL INTO A REALM OF NO TIME. HIS NAME? LIKE NONE OTHER. JESUS. TOTAL ROGUE. TOTAL RESOLUTE. THE ULTIMATE EXTRAORDINARY OUTCAST.



HOW IT WORKS

THE MECHANICS OF FORGIVENESS

BY ABRAHAM PAUL

I've been a mechanic for 20 years and the beauty of an engine is in its simplicity and clarity. When the "check engine" light comes on, you fix the problem and the light goes off. Things either work or they don't. A good mechanic is not determined by how you *feel* about him, or if he's a nice guy, but if the engine works when he's done.

It seems crazy not to use this same, common-sense logic when it comes to looking for answers to our inner problems. There is an unspoken, underlying thought that anything about God is "nice," but no one has any expectations that what He offers actually does anything practical. But either God works, or He isn't.



I got the nickname "burn-out" as a teenager working in mechanic shops. Not because of my personality or habits, but because I burned out several motors while trying to learn how they worked. The smell of melting wires and seized engines were kind of my trademark. My co-workers and I found it funny, but my bosses, not so much.

I was sitting face to face with a beautiful man in a Colorado DOC facility. He was serving life. *He told me that nothing helps deal with his guilt.* He tried the whole gamut of religions. For a while, he felt better, but once he returned to his cell, the hope vanished, and he was crushed by the feelings of condemnation and a tormented conscience. They simply didn't work. He must have told me ten times how he just could not forgive himself. What he had done was killing him inside. I showed him Romans 8:1. Paul says *"There is now no condemnation (no guilt, no punishment, no penalty) for those who are in Christ Jesus."* He stopped me mid-sentence and said *"Wait, what?! Do you mean no guilt? How is that even possible?"* Brother, not only is it possible, it's the entire reason Jesus came.

Religions don't work to remove man's guilt because they are only doctrines, teachings, feelings, and emotions. Jesus is not about empty concepts and ideals. *He is the only One who did something in time and space to physically remove our guilt.*

Not A Concept. But Reality

When I first learned about engines, it was through the mail. I passed all the written tests. So on paper, I was a "Certified Mechanic." I knew all the concepts, saw the diagrams, and learned the terminology. But the first time I removed the head of an engine, I was overwhelmed by the reality of it. I realized I didn't have a clue how to fix what was broken.

I've heard so many men talk about the 'sacrificed blood of Jesus' with much emotion, but when asked: *"Why does it matter?"*, they reply with blank stares and no understanding. They've learned the doctrines, but don't know how it practically works.

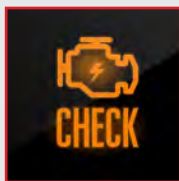


Turning the Gears of our Mind

After admitting I didn't know what I was talking about, I had to relearn so much of what I thought I already knew. It took a lot of thinking to grasp the workings of an engine, but in the end, it was well worth it. In the same way, brother, I'm gonna ask you to stretch your mind a bit to get this. I know how irrelevant and 'out there' a word like "sacrifice" can sound. But understanding the sacrifice of Jesus will give you something real. It will conquer all of the accusations and memories that flood your mind in the tormenting hours of the night. So just roll with me, okay, man? Sacrifice is not some side issue. It's not like a taillight or horn, but the heart of the engine. It's literally the entire thing of the whole Bible. So let's break it down like we would if we were gonna diagnose an engine:

Check Engine Light

When you're driving a car and the "Check Engine" light comes on, you know you can't



ignore it. The car may continue to run, but it's only a matter of time before it shuts you down and you're on the side of the road. (Like when my

engine light came on and my alternator failed while in the Peruvian desert and the nearest mechanic within 100 miles was a goat.)

Guilt is our "check engine" light. It nags us, telling us something is wrong. Guilt

is no joke. If you ignore it, it'll continue to wreak havoc in your heart and mind and shut you down. A sinner's prayer or Bible verse may ease it off, but it'll come right back. Guilt has to be dealt with.

The Diagnosis

When you take your car to the shop, the mechanic will hook it up to a diagnostic machine. He will do a thorough analysis to define the origin and pinpoint the exact location of the problem. Otherwise, he'll end up trying to fix a symptom of the problem without ever dealing with the root cause.



Our conscience is the very seat of our being. It is the location and source of all of our guilt. It's like a busted head-gasket that keeps leaking oil. It's a small indication of an enormous problem that will seize the engine if not fixed.

The constant dripping of guilt proves that the conscience is broken down and needs an overhaul. Just like in an engine rebuild, it's necessary to remove the old gasket and, after thoroughly being cleaned, a new gasket can be installed. So also our conscience must be washed clean so that the seal of forgiveness can be properly seated and stop the leakage of guilt.

LIKE A CHAIN, THE STRENGTH COMES WHEN ALL THE IDEAS 'LINK' TOGETHER IN YOUR MIND.

A Temporary Repair

When an engine needs a complete overhaul, you have to do a temporary fix to hold it over until you can get the right parts. It takes time to set up and have everything laid out in perfect order.

The Old Testament is kind of like that. It was a temporary fix for a gigantic problem God was preparing to solve later in Jesus.^{103/40/60}

We all have that feeling that when we do something wrong, we should try to do something right to compensate for the wrong we did. So many men talk about starting a charity after leaving prison in hopes to make up for their crimes. We hope that the good stuff we do will atone for the bad stuff we did and our conscience would stop nagging us. This thinking actually comes out of our conscience as an effort to appease our need for atonement and sacrifice.

The Mechanics of Sacrifice

It's not as complicated as you think, bro. The whole thing of sacrifice can be summed up in one word: Substitute. It's like an exchange or a replacement. Instead of God killing a man for his sin, He allowed the man to substitute one of his animals. The penalty for his sin would fall on the animal, instead of on him. It was a life for a life. The blood of the animal was offered in exchange for his blood and he would be forgiven (Lev. 5).

You see, God says: *"For the life of all flesh is in the blood"* and so *"Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness"* (Lev.17:11/Heb.9:22).⁶⁰ Makes sense, hey, man?

Every time this happened, it was only for one specific sin. It would temporarily remove the guilt, but it came right back because sin is not just an occasional act but the very nature in which we live. It just got to be absurd. Men just couldn't keep up with all the sacrifices needed for their sins. Many guys have told me about having to remember all their sins to confess to a priest. They just gave up because they couldn't keep up.

Complete Overhaul

Before beginning an engine overhaul, a mechanic will sit down and calculate every detail of the work to be done. He'll make sure that he has every tool, part, fitting, and knows all specifications so the engine will run perfectly once reassembled.

Before coming to Earth, Jesus sat down and contemplated every legal detail of what He would have to do to offer a perfect sacrifice and meet all of the Father's requirements. He thought about you by name and what it would take to restore you. He saw your crime, whether it was theft, rape, murder, or something even worse. *Jesus calculated the exact, excruciating punishment He would have to bear for the crimes of the entire world.*⁵¹

It's like Jesus got up, came to the Father, and despite everything, said, *I will go. I will offer My own perfect blood as the substitute sacrifice for their sin. It will be one sacrifice for all sin, for all time. They won't have to do anything. I will do it all* (Heb.10:7-10).^{46/51/60}

The High Cost of Reliable Performance

Jesus did not do this on some distant, cosmic planet, or in a mystical dream. He took on a physical body and walked as one of us. He carried in Himself the same sin that broke our conscience, so He could fully relate to everything.¹⁰⁰ He willingly, from His own heart, carried a cross up a hill, *"as a lamb being lead to slaughter"* (Is.53:7). For that one moment, God put upon Him the entirety of sin (not individual sins, but all sin) so it could be one sacrifice for all time. Jesus bore the full penalty that we deserve and it killed Him. As the sacrificed Lamb of God and our substitute, on the cross, Jesus won *"eternal redemption."* Not with the blood of animals, but with His own perfect blood *"He offered Himself without blemish to God, and cleansed our conscience"* (Heb. 9:14/Jn.1:29). When Jesus cried out *"It is finished!"*, at that moment the "check engine" light clicked off (Jn.19:30). What He did works! *Guilt was absolved. Absolute forgiveness, for all things past, present, and future was complete.*^{52/58/45}

Just Get In And Drive

If someone gave you a brand-new, high performance vehicle with a chrome-plated V8 turbo, you wouldn't go work on the engine, you would hit the open road.

The sacrifice of Jesus is complete and requires no work from you. Get in and drive. Believe Him.⁶⁸ He walked out of the tomb and tossed you the keys to the ultimate "vehicle" that can take you to His Father.^{36/99/57}

So if you leave this article thinking you got to clean up your act to get forgiven, then I'm sorry, man, but you missed the whole point. As long as you think it's up to you, then your guilt will remain. A constant dripping of guilt proves that the seal of forgiveness was not properly seated. Anything that you think you have to stop or start doing, is you trying to offer up your own "sacrifice" for each individual failure and sin. If it's still up to us to make amends for ourselves, then everything Jesus did was in vain.^{63/68/60/44}

HIS FORGIVENESS IS SUCH THAT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU DID. IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DID.

To believe Him is not some long, drawn-out process of reform. It's a simple choice. It is real faith that says *"I'm not good and I never can be. I can't forgive myself, but Jesus, You did, and that is all that matters. Your blood is enough."*

Every time Satan accuses you or tries to use guilt to bring you down, recall His sacrifice. Forgiveness doesn't forgive. Jesus forgives. Stop trying. Start believing.

When the guilt is gone, it's like the freedom of driving along the ocean with the top down and the wind in your hair. There is no greater happiness in all of life than being forgiven.^{59/57}



YOU WILL GROW AGAIN

BY RACHEL

One year in Brazil, I had two jasmine plants; large, beautiful, fragrant plants with white flowers and dark green leaves. One was doing great, the other not so much. Its leaves were getting sparse and yellow. It stopped flowering. Kinda gave me a complex. Everybody always takes bets on how long it will take for me to kill a plant. I stormed to the rooftop and threw it off. Just kidding. I put it where it got more sun. But when I checked on it one day, I found that every single leaf was stripped bare. No leaves around it, so it wasn't like the wind took them off. It was a dead plant.

At first, I blamed the flock of parrots that hung

THE TREE DIED BUT ITS LIFE WASN'T OVER, IN FACT, ITS LIFE WAS ACTUALLY JUST BEGINNING.

out by the roof, which woke everyone up at 4 am each day. But I was puzzled because I didn't think birds ate leaves. Think how weird that would be for trees if birds ate leaves. Anyways, I decided not to discard the plant but just wait and see what would happen.

In the meantime, while sweeping the kitchen one day, I spotted a "herd" of giant ants, each like an inch long, parading in. I traced their path and followed them outside into a washroom area, up a flight of stairs, and over the rooftop wall.

They were carrying scraps of food all the way from the kitchen, and their path went right next to where my plant had been sitting. Like Butch Cassidy said to the Sundance Kid, "Who are these guys?!?" I remembered seeing a Nat Geo special about ants carrying leaves and realized that it had to be the ants who had ravaged my jasmine plant. Only in Brazil.

Mystery solved! But now for the amazing part. Even though it seemed hopeless (the plant looked pitiful), I continued to water it and give it sunlight. With my past record, the odds were definitely against me. Then one day, I was shocked to discover the leaves began returning. Not in a sparse, sporadic way, but fuller and healthier, and greener than ever before. It was no longer a dying plant but flourishing, life-giving, with fuller blossoms and a sweeter fragrance. I have never seen such a wonderful occurrence.

My precious sister and brother, this type of transformation can be reflected in our lives. When we are stripped bare of all we know and have, we feel like we can't even recognize ourselves. We can begin to build something real, become deeper in our "color", more fragrant, and grow with brighter "blossoms" than ever before. *Take heart, you will grow again.*¹³ Coming from a tragic background or circumstances of nothing does not prohibit nor hinder you from becoming new. It is actually what qualifies you to be chosen and transformed. Check out 1Cor.1:26-29.

Did you Know? Leaf Cutter ants are amazing creatures that can carry 50 times their own weight. They have unique "chain-saw" like jaws that cut the leaves. Living in colonies of up to 10 million, the largest nests can cover a space between 320 to 6,460 square feet in total. The size and complexity of their societies is rivaled only by humans. These trails of ants with cut leaves can stretch 100 ft over the forest floor, moving up and down trees. They can strip an entire tree in less than 24 hours.

The largest flower in the world is 3ft wide. (It actually stinks really bad lol)

On Pointe - BY ELIZABETH -

Hello there, I bet you may wonder how my story of becoming a ballerina could have anything possible to relate to you sitting here in prison. But this is the precise place we can come together, "anything is possible". Of course, I'm going to qualify it as in the Lord, for it is only possible with His power, which is available to you as well.¹⁰⁹ Right from the start I was told, "Sorry, honey, this is not for you". When you hear that over and over again, it's time to quit. But I didn't.

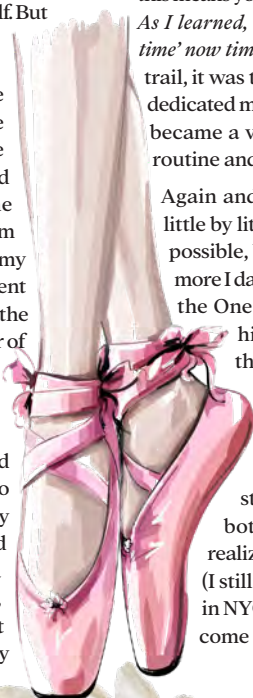
My name is Elizabeth, it had been a dream of mine to dance ballet on pointe. I wanted to learn the expression of this exquisite art of gracefulness to inspire others with the elegance and majesty of the living God. Due to our lifestyle of continual travel, the opportunity had never before presented itself. But a few years ago, we were living in Southern Brazil and I approached the idea of taking classes. The lady doing the fitting for pointe shoes patiently explained that it would be impossible for me, as an adult, to dance ballet on pointe (tip of the toes). That word "impossible" rang through my mind. She said that for my stature, being as tall as I am and with my large frame physique (from my football-playing dad), I could risk permanent injury to my feet for the rest of my life. At the time, I was devastated. When I put on a pair of pointe shoes, the pain was unbearable. It seemed quite ridiculous to even try. But I decided to go "all in."

When I first started class, other students and even teachers laughed at me. But I chose not to allow any negative opinions to determine my future. Maybe you have always wanted to paint, play an instrument, learn a language, or accomplish a goal, but you have been told the 'right time' has already passed you by

and you shouldn't even try.

When the calendar, the clock, and voices around you say, "It's hopeless," but your heart says, "Let's go for this" this means you are right "on pointe!" As I learned, we can make the 'right time' now time! So, I blazed my own trail, it was tough. I trained hard and dedicated myself to discipline. Patience became a very close friend. I changed up my routine and worked past a lot of pain and blisters.

Again and again, I faced the "Impossible". And little by little, I began to realize that it was not only possible, but it was going to be phenomenal!¹³ The more I danced, the more I loved it! For I could follow the One my heart loves now with hind's feet to high places! (Ps.18:33) I can joyfully tell you that, to date, I have since danced on pointe throughout this country and overseas. So my brother, or sister, you can find your "pointe" too. It is NOT impossible!¹³ I will never forget that first moment I actually stood on pointe. I was so happy, I started both laughing and crying out loud! Desire realized!! I must have smiled for a week straight (I still am)! More than dancing on a fancy stage in NYC, Paris, Rome, or Moscow, it is my dream come true to dance in this prison for you!



MAKE A PLANTER



1.) TAKE A PLASTIC WATER OR SODA BOTTLE (ANY SIZE), REMOVE THE LABEL AND CUT OFF THE TOP ON AN ANGLE (SO ONE SIDE IS HIGHER THAN THE OTHER).

- 2.) POKE A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM FOR DRAINAGE.
- 3.) POKE A HOLE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BOTTLE.
- 4.) PAINT WITH ANY COLOR, DECORATE WITH YARN OR LEAVE TRANSPARENT.
- 5.) THREAD STRING THROUGH THE HOLES ON BOTH SIDES. CHOOSE HOW LONG YOU WANT IT TO HANG AND TIE A KNOT AT THE TOP OF THE STRING.
- 6.) FILL WITH SOIL ABOUT HALFWAY FULL.
- 7.) PLANT THE SEED ABOUT THE DEPTH OF YOUR FINGER, ALLOWING ROOM FOR THE ROOTS TO GROW UNDERNEATH.
- 8.) HANG IN AREA WITH PARTIAL SUNLIGHT, WATER FREQUENTLY AND WATCH THE MAGIC HAPPEN!

Did you know that there are over 400,000 different

types of flowers and there are about 1,700 different scent

compounds produced by those flowers in the world?



THURSDAY MARKET

Just another Thursday on the market street, people hustle to bundles of goods and tables of raw meat.

There was a man asleep in a heap of trash, then I saw three young guys with their hands tied behind their backs.

The police had guns and put them in trucks, driving out over a pile of worn-out rugs.

I wanted to say aloud, "Don't take them away!" but the process in place allows for no delays.

I knew behind the gates of where they would end up,

and that the road ahead would indeed be very tough.

So I said, "Please, God, follow them to prison and let them know they're loved!"

Elizabeth



THE VETERAN

The shrapnel that had pierced his hands caused deep scars. The wound where the bayonet had stabbed his side was still raw. His back was grotesquely marred from the hours of torture he had endured as a prisoner of war. Unimaginable suffering had aged him to look two decades older than He was. He should have received a hero's welcome, but instead, was treated with the scorn of a criminal. He was abandoned by the very country He fought to save. He bore it with honor. He will never leave a fellow wounded soldier behind.

- Jesus, the Veteran.

To all you who have served, thank you for your sacrifice.

Ruth



BARKING THOUGHTS

When Covid hit, the normally mobbed streets of São Paulo, Brazil, became eerily deserted. I would get up early and run laps, 2 miles each, around the same blocks.

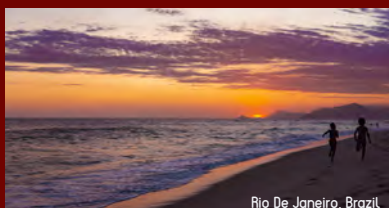
One morning, I ran a full marathon this way, as I had been training for it before it was cancelled due to Covid. 13 laps for 26 miles. It was a cool challenge as it required both physical and mental stamina. At a certain house, there was a massive Rottweiler dog that would go nuts when I ran by and scare the heck out of me. The first time I think I jumped five feet (who says white girls can't jump?). But the dog was well behind a huge, secure fence so, though it growled and drooled, it couldn't touch me. Now, here is the dumb part: The next time I ran by, lost in thought, I again jumped when the SAME

dog barked in the SAME place. Until I finally remembered the house, knew it was coming, and ignored the stupid thing.

Thoughts are kinda like that. Barking dogs behind fences. They can't hurt us, but the way we respond to them can. If that dog had caused me to jump in front of a passing car, the consequences could have been tragic although the threat was not real. Memories, hurts, and regrets can "bark" so loud and trigger a fear so real, we react. So what you have to do is be ready. Know they are coming and realize that you are dealing with an invisible concept, not an actual threat.

Paul says we can put all our thoughts "behind a fence". They may be there "barking", but they have no power to harm us...unless we let them. "We demolish arguments ... we take captive every thought" (2Cor.10:5). This is T. R. T.

Elizabeth



Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

Choose Your Own Adventure At The Ocean

There is a secret place on the shores of Rio de Janeiro where you can watch the waves crash upon the rocks from a white, sandy shore. Ever since I was little, I would love to run barefoot on the beach and see how close I could get to the waves without getting my feet wet. For me, going to the ocean is like going to see your best friend! We get there just in time before sunset. The smell of salt floats on the cool breeze that lifts the wings of the Albatross. Our smiles meet, as this is exactly the moment I wanted to share with you. The tiny sandpipers run through the foam as they race the waves. The sky is painted in pastel colors blending fuchsia into orange and pink into gold, with soft airbrushed clouds that spread like feathers.

We sit on the sand and let it sift through our hands. "Back in the day, people used to measure time like this with an hourglass," I say, "but when we are here, I do not feel that time is slipping away". "Yeah," you agree, "It's like we are beyond time in this moment." We are hit with a splash of sea mist coming off the rocks, and both laugh as we are caught by surprise. "Yeah," I say, as I wipe my eyes, "No matter where you are, it is when you are still and focused inside that you can find God's presence and escape the burden of time in this earthly life. His personal thoughts to you are more numerous than the sand on these shores". Slowly, the sun sinks below the horizon and the waves turn silver as if to illuminate our departure.

Elizabeth

THE CRAZY WAR



Led Zeppelin, Moody Blues, Barry White, and drugs, set my psyche each night to blow up my ego into a one-man show called "Crazy War"; a nickname in college. Football was my passion and violence my edge. I realized I don't got to be 6'5, I just got to hit like a mad-man.

After a night of performing on my bar room stage, I'd enter a 12 round bout with my conscience: "THIS AIN'T ME. Yes, it is. NO, IT AIN'T! I am no man's fool. BUT I AM NOTHING WITHOUT IMAGE." It was a mental Armageddon destined for the final act... "BROKEN".

No one knew how alone I felt. A 'crazy war' aptly described my inner torment. What moron would risk his life to do the crap I did? I figured my life didn't count for crap, destined for NoWheresville. Then, I got injured and fell into the abyss. At the same time, a very weird thing happened. My beautiful catholic mom started telling me about a "living Jesus". And my "good, church-going" dad hated her for it. My dad was a man full of rage. It was bizarre. I couldn't figure out why he hated mom because she loved Jesus, while he loved church. Crazy stuff.

Long story short, my mom put a thought in me: "Why not try to make a secret deal with God? If He exists, what do I got to lose?" I needed a scholarship to remain in school and play ball. But the odds were overwhelmingly against me 'cuz, due to injury, I'd only practiced 10 days. So I was ecstatic when my head coach called me in his office to grant me a full-ride scholarship. I walked outside and, fully clothed, dove into the pond, in front of Rose Center, and swam across it.

God answering my prayer was the catalyst for my change. "Hmmm... could this mean God actually exists and hears me?" I also read a kid's book, that I *hid* under my stereo with my New Testament. (Not exactly badass material). It was about a caterpillar in search of becoming a butterfly (Hope For The Flowers). That summer I hitchhiked alone, out east to the White Mountains, while contemplating this "Jesus" in a little Gospel of John I carried in my back pocket. Who was this guy? *Could he have any impact on my lost miserable life?* Slowly I began to grasp his purpose and meaning. His words captivated and enchanted me. The ultimate question was, "Is Jesus alive, here and now, TODAY? Could he come to a scumbag like me?"

When I got back to Grand Rapids, MI, my mom talked me into going to a conference at Notre Dame. (That place was like heaven on earth to us.). I silenced Mr. Ego long enough to sneak in my intelligence for a thought process, in which my heart was able to kick in. It was a summer afternoon with an intoxicating smell of fresh-cut grass. I simply chose to follow the *living* Jesus, in that football stadium, June 14th, 1974. God has an awesome sense of personal touch and humor. I mean come on...N.D. football stadium?! Coincidence?

I've seen so many guys lose their grit and become a religious wimp. I want to scream, "Brother, NOOOOOOOO!" Don't mimic a group. Go to the living Jesus. I still have the fight of "Crazy War" against this evil world. But now Jesus is my core of REAL. My identity didn't become religious muck. Defiance of the Spirit to Satan's empire is my arsenal. I arrived at camp in August, football "hell-week", and was instantly surrounded by fellow crazies, howling like hyenas, demanding my crazy show. They'd heard a rumor: "The Crazy War 'found God' in an acid trip". "No, fellas, it wasn't acid. It is my will to follow Jesus". Peer pressure is a vicious head game. I said "Hey, fellas. Ya. I'm a traitor to the cause of madness. Show's over. I'm done playing the fool". They hated me, I gave 'em my new "badass" love. First time I ever felt the extraordinary crown of a beautiful outcast.

Ruth

WHO AM I?

Answers on page 48



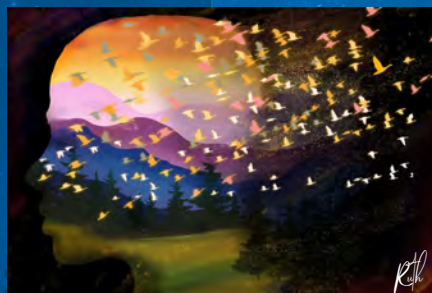
IDEA: YOU COULD USE THE CONTENT OF THIS MAGAZINE TO ASK QUESTIONS LIKE THESE AND PLAY A JEOPARDY GAME WITH A GROUP.

1 I was so grieved and angry. To be accused by that evil woman of the very thing I refused and have her throw slime on my character and reputation...well, it tore me up inside. It didn't matter what I said, they believed her, not me, so I am in prison... for a very long time. But dwelling on what I could not change made things worse. I chose instead to believe God. I became a leader of such caliber that my fellow inmates as well as the guards came to me for counsel. I too am a prisoner. My life is on the inside. Who Am I?

2 I would lay in my cell and just dream of getting out. I have so much to do on the outside, it kills me to languish my days away here. One day, all of a sudden, the earth shook and jarred the prison doors open. This was not a dream. The guards were gone and I could just walk out. But I did not. I sat back down. If my staying here, could save another life, then that mattered more than getting out. My life is on the inside. I too am a prisoner. Who Am I?

3 I am not sure how long I will be trapped in this dark, wet cave. It stinks so bad I feel nauseous. A madman out there wants to murder me and I have to watch my back in here because my own men are threatening mutiny. I don't think a single outer thing could be worse, but my life is on the inside. I dwell in the shelter of the Most High. In His house, I am happy. I too am a prisoner. Who Am I?

4 I sit here on death row, hours away from my court-appointed execution time. No one comes to visit me. No stay to be had. I am innocent, framed by those who, for no reason, hate me. In my last moments, I forgive each of them. My life is on the inside. I too am a prisoner. Who Am I?



Choose Your Own Adventure *Campfire In The Mountains*

"Do you like marshmallows?" I ask while unfolding some camp chairs. "Only if they are the kind that don't come from any marsh!" you joke back. We took a trip out West to Montana. You told me about the limited prison menu and all the "wonderful" options at the cafeteria (including the rare delicacies of peanut butter and jellé sandwiches). So I wanted to cook you a 16 oz Aged Ribeye with onions, mushrooms, a once-over egg, and loaded baked potato by a roaring campfire. We found the perfect spot in the mountains. Getting the kindling is always the fun part as we went walking into the forest before the darkness set in. I think we hauled out enough to heat Alaska all winter long!

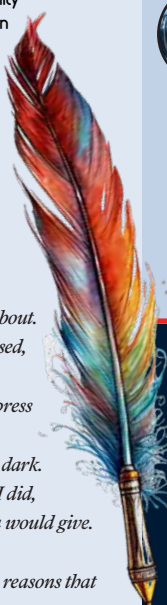
The logs were dry so everything ignited in perfect unison. The flames were like a living work of art. It was therapy just watching them. They transformed the gray ash into deep gold and crimson embers. The smell of smoke on the cold air was as rich as an expensive perfume. We had wrapped the potatoes in foil and they were just finishing as the steaks got to a sweet medium-rare sear. The crackle of the fire resounded in the symphonic song of comfort, light, and protection. It was warm, bright, and reassuring in its companionship, despite the uncertainty of the night. "It all starts with just a spark. Pretty crazy, huh?" I say as I pass you the canteen. "Yeah, you'd never think something so magnificent could start with something so small," you add. "You don't need a lot, sometimes, just a tiny spark of faith will do". You laugh, as you agree, "And you never know, but the fire might just grow, s'more and s'more!!" Your laughter was contagious.

A POEM FOR YOUR LOVED ONES

Here is a poem that you can share with your family and loved ones, maybe on the phone, in person or in a letter.

Dawning Deep Within

*Life has torn us apart,
How could this happen so fast?
I thought everything that we had
was surely going to last...
But here I am, just staring at the ground,
in all the silence, I hear my heart pound.
So I have to tell you, it is all my fault,
things I can't explain and can't say much more about.
I am so deeply sorry for the pain that I have caused,
I was the one who was certainly in the wrong.
My care for you is real, as this poem helps express
my heart,
for the truth is the lifeline that lifts me from the dark.
I gotta say, I don't know how I could do what I did,
I would plead, that to me, a second chance you would give.
I believe, and of you I ask,
that the changes in the future, would be all the reasons that
we won't look back.
I pray, in the mercy of God, as this would be my greatest wish,
that in the light of His love our lives we could choose to live.
Some way, somehow, may His presence come to comfort you
now, and lift you with healing on His wings,
may He help us to rise above the weight of all the little things.
I will not give up, regret is not my end,
something beautiful is dawning deep within.*



B.J. Elizabeth

TRAINING PROGRAM

B.J. Shindon



Ready to step up your game and get ripped? If you have access to some weights and you want real gains, here is the newest and most effective method:

It's called Time Under Tension (TUT). Instead of doing a few reps at the heaviest weight, you go down to a weight you can slowly and continually lift for a full 45 seconds. The idea is to keep whatever muscle you're working under constant tension. You will deal with fewer injuries and notice you get sore faster and thus increase gains.



Triple3Twenty is a simple, easy workout routine you can do a few times a week. You

can do it right there next to your bed. You want to do these nice, smooth, and slow. Do 3 sets of these 3 exercises for 20 reps each: 20 sit-ups, 20 push-ups, and 20 squats.



Pair this with HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) to begin to lose weight as well. Three

times a week find something you can do at full-out exertion like jumping rope, etc. For example, after warming up, sprint for 20 seconds, and rest for 20 seconds. Repeat that ten times. This is more effective for weight loss than long, drawn-out cardio.

SHOCKA TONY *B.J. Ruff*



Name's Tony, Shocka Tony. But everybody whose anybody calls me Shock, cuz I kinda shock the world with my attitude, see? I call it "Rattitude" (If you think that's cheesy, I'm a rat, I'm big on cheese, so what, ok?). I'm not the snitch kind, but the WHOAdent kind: Like, "Whoa! Who is this guy!?" I'm a real square dude and a big deal. Yeah, I said big. Cuz big ain't got nothing to do with our body size, see? And if that's what some of you mugs are thinking, well, I'm gonna question the size of your brain. Big is about some of that swell invisible stuff like character.

See, I can shock the socks off someone by the way I listen instead of just talk. I'm so big I can defuse tension by saying I'm sorry even if it's not my fault. I can ease stress with humor or even go so far as to pick a guy up by giving him my snack! I take a vacation from any situation with the adaptation of Rattitude mixed with gratitude, which is my beatitude (Rat rap for you). See, no matter how bad this joint may be, I can choose

the attitude of a king, and that's what Rattitude is all about.

Look, we can do some real swell stuff in this joint. Like, start a "Rattitude" club and once a week have a talent show, comedy night, or poetry contest. Invite guys, appoint leaders, and keep points. You get the picture. Anyway, I got to run. I got a million ideas to "Shock" others with big-time love. So, remember the name, Tony, Shocka Tony. And yo, bro, you can be a big deal too, ok?





TURNING LONELINESS INTO SOLITUDE

— BY JOSHUA JOHN —

Sometimes, the hardest part of life is that deep feeling of being all alone, ain't it? Loneliness is this undefinable pain that works behind the scenes to undermine our very existence. We don't wanna talk about it, we can't explain it, but we think about it day and night. I'm not going to try to tell you the 'answer' to this problem, but face it with you. Because the truth can rescue our minds from the torment of a thousand lies.

The lie? *"Everyone has someone, but I... I have no one. If only I had someone, I wouldn't feel like this.. oh, so alone."* Now, the truth can sound like a 'downer,' but I have learned that reality is a healing balm to our wounded minds. The truth is... *no one has anyone. We all feel alone. I do, you do, we all do. And even if you had 'someone', you would still feel like you had no one, because no one can really know you and give you what you need.* Even those surrounded by friends, married with a family, in a group, or on a team, will secretly confess that they still feel all alone inside. I cannot tell you how many times, in how many places, from Tokyo to Toledo, someone has shared their pain with me, *"Dude, I am just so lonely... I got no one. I'm all alone."*

Take a deep breath. Say it with me *"Yeah, I'm all alone, but so what? I can make it. In fact, I can come to love being alone."* It's a part of life. It's not your fault and it's not a personal issue. *It is a feeling inside of all of us but each of us decide how much priority to give this feeling.* It can make us desperate to find other people. But often it is other people who pull us into a gang, a disastrous relationship, hypocrisy, drugs, drunkenness, or hurt us so deep we are left in shambles and want to give up.

So, I would propose to you, my precious brother, or sister, to switch it. *Flip things around.* Take control of it before it takes control of you. Have you ever contemplated the word 'solitude'? A similar word to loneliness but nothing like it. In fact, it's more than a word. It is a soldier on a horse riding alone into battle. It is a man walking a road alone in the rain to some distant destination. It is driving at night with the windows down, with the notes of a Spanish guitar on the radio. It is walking away from a small-town mindset or big-city hype. Solitude is the acceptance of being alone and the determination to find strength where others find only pain. It is the individual thought-life of a resolute contemplative.

This is your life. Your journey. Can you accept that? Can you embrace it? *Can we stop looking for a magical unicorn that does not exist?* It will save us so much heartache, my friend, if we can come to terms with, and resolve this deep within. Jesus offers the simple answer to forget about ourselves. We can learn to not care so much about how we feel. *The promise of forgetting about yourself is that you begin to live beyond yourself.* Endless hope.

Become a soldier of solitude; SOS. God will help you. He does not think lightly of our suffering. Jesus promises great rewards to anyone who will overcome (Rev.2:17). Evaluate your deepest sadness in light of eternal life. Jesus does not take away your loneliness, but He will face it with you because He too knows what it's like. He freely offers His Spirit to 'come alongside' and comfort anyone who just asks. So, access His grace in your moments of pain. *"...The Father of mercies and God of all comfort... comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."* ^{2Cor.1:3}

FROM LONEMAN COMIC PAGE 38

"The one thing I will always have with me is me. I am always a lone man. That's it. A lone Man. I will no longer think of my aloneness as my weakness but as my strength. For if I determine I am always a lone man, then I will never be vulnerable to think I cannot be a lone man. I will draw from within my utter aloneness the resolute power of absolute acceptance of it. If I accept my aloneness as the place in which I can become whomever I choose to become, then I am no longer subject to anyone or anything. I calculate my aloneness AS IS and allow this resolution to source my strength.

In the mental tangle of indecision and double-minded impulse, I choose to be solemn. To not only accept but celebrate my power to decide. It is not a mere passing moment in time, or emotional surge of positive thought, but a choice for new identity. It is my baptism of fire. I choose to cherish and plunder my TIME, not burn through it in agony like logs on a fire. I will be a source, not a victim. I will turn aloneness against itself by dismissing its frontal assault of habitual success. It expects me to fight and resist, but I will respond with acceptance. I will not deny its truth, that I am a lone man, but I will counter with the response that takes my minuscule, overblown 80 years on earth, and puts them in the grand scope of all mankind: "SO WHAT?". I will make this master into a slave. I will make fire in the rain. I am. I can. I will."

Soldier Of Solitude

This is a rap I wrote and perform in our show. David, our DJ, took the soundtrack from the Rambo movie First Blood and remixed it to a trap beat. I sent it to some guys in Kansas and they actually learned it and did their own versions and a rap competition among themselves.

WE WALK A LONELY ROAD, A LONELY ROAD WE WALK, ON YOUR OWN AND NO ONE KNOWING, FAR FROM HOME, BUT YOU KEEP ON GOING, YEAH, YOU GOT DEFIANCE THAT'S INSIDE OF YOU, CUZ NO ONE WOULD CONFIDE IN YOU, AND EVERYBODY LIED TO YOU. AND MAYBE BEING TRUE IS NEW TO YOU, CUZ YOU WERE NEVER TRUE TO YOU, JUST DID WHAT OTHERS TOLD YOU TO, BUT IT'S TIME THAT YOU STOOD FOR YOU, AND DID WHAT WAS GOOD FOR YOU.

SWITCH-UP: YOU'RE NOT JUST A CLOWN ALONG FOR THE RIDE, WHEN NO ONE'S AROUND, WHO ARE YOU INSIDE? YOU'RE TIRED OF TRYIN, BUT NOT GIVING UP, LIKE STUCK ON AN ISLAND, SENDING SMOKE UP, SOLDIER OF SOLITUDE, IT'S YOUR S.O.S., CUZ YOU'RE NOT JUST A FOLLOWER, YOU'RE NOT LIKE THE REST. NO ONE CAN STOP YOU FROM PASSING THIS TEST, CUZ THIS IS YOUR LIFE, THIS IS YOUR QUEST.

CHORUS: I WALK A LONELY ROAD, A LONELY ROAD I WALK, YEAH I KNOW I'M ON MY OWN, BUT I'M NOT GIVIN' UP. A SOLDIER OF SOLITUDE, IT'S HOW I AM, IT'S HOW I DO. A WARRIOR'S WILL IS RESOLUTE. HEART RESOLVED, NO SUBSTITUTE. YEAH, I'M A SOLDIER OF SOLITUDE.

BREAKDOWN: I FEEL LIKE HAVING FRIENDS IS OVERRATED, AND I AIN'T SAYING THAT LIKE I'M JADED, JUST ONCE THE NOVELTY HAS FADED, AND THINGS GET COMPLICATED, SUDDENLY EVERYONE BE LEAVING, THEY SAID "CALL ME IF YOU NEED ME." THEN THEY DISAPPEARED LIKE HOUDINI, BUT ACTUALLY, I THINK THEY FREED ME.

SWITCH-UP: SO LET'S AGREE TO DISAGREE THAT BEING ALONE IS BAD FOR YOU, CUZ PEOPLE NOT WHO THEY PRETEND TO BE, SO YEAH, YOU GET AN ATTITUDE, YOU GET INTO A COMBATIVE MOOD, CUZ NO ONE'S FEELING BAD FOR YOU. BUT YA GOTTA BUILD YOURSELF INTO A SOLID DUDE WHO'S NOT AFRAID OF SOLITUDE, FIND A MOLECULE OF GRATITUDE TO REACH THE LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE OF A BE-A-BIGGER-MAN KIND OF ATTITUDE.

CHORUS: WE WALK A LONELY ROAD, A LONELY ROAD WE WALK, YOU KNOW YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, BUT YOU'RE NOT GIVING UP. YOU'RE A SOLDIER OF SOLITUDE, IT'S WHO YOU ARE, IT'S HOW YOU DO. A WARRIOR'S WILL IS RESOLUTE. A HEART RESOLVED- NO SUBSTITUTE. YEAH, YOU'RE A SOLDIER OF SOLITUDE.



CALCULATE

BY MICHAEL PETER, AKA RAVEN

Have you ever heard how elite scholars teach themselves a language? Well, I taught myself how to cheat my way through 12 yrs. of school. Not bad, eh? My kind of “elite”. Not bragging, just saying that we can all accomplish such things if we don’t want to try. Wait...what? My reverse logic back in the days of being an idiot. Lord, have mercy. And He did. Imagine: You get on a flight not knowing the pilot cheated in flight school and is now clueless. You need an eye operation and end up blind. The consequence of cheating can be monumental. No thanks.

When I realized I could get away with stuff and no one would know, or care, I thought “Yeehaw. I’m on Easy Street.” Then a terrible thing happened. I grew up and was alone in life. Gulp. Now what? Consequences of cheating end in disaster. Dead brain. I ‘fell through the cracks’ into the cesspool of the heartless. If you don’t know how to think, then you don’t... think. Life ends in death and it’s coming at you in full force like a freight train from hell.

See that man in the mirror? He needs your help, bro, not your excuses or blame. Give him a hand. You can still beat the odds. I was so buried in crap I thought I’d never get out, but I did. And so can you, bro. I learned how to learn. Don’t play the dumb ox. You’ll start believing your own B.S. You don’t need a PhD to understand spiritual things. Not one of the 12 disciples was educated. If you can add 2+2 and not get 8, you can ponder “*I am the Bread of life*” and find life.⁸⁵ I was shocked to see what I came up with when I blew the dust off my brain. Laziness is a bottomless pit. You got to win your own mind games to escape it and advance.

MILLIONS OF BRAIN CELLS ARE WAITING TO CREATE NEW ‘BRAIN PATHS’ TO FORM A NEW FUTURE OF A NEW MAN.

THE INCARNATION

We’ve all heard Jesus is the embodiment of God. John 1:1,14 describes this event. He proclaimed Himself to be God and was killed for it. He came in our stupid flesh. Yet, He offers us GOD. How’s that happen? Before Jesus came to earth, mankind lived by instincts, impulse, moods, and the mere dictates of wicked flesh. Despite a culture of lowly outcasts, Jesus said anyone could become extraordinary.³³ As a Divine Architect, He presented a blueprint of how to “**Calculate**” a new life with new thinking.

Instead of instincts and impulse, i.e. ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth’, Jesus says, “*But I say to you...*” (Mt.5:38-42).

Calculus is the origin of calculate. It

was an ancient math process to break down big things into very small things. In this case, big thoughts and goals into micro-motives where His divine power can enter our sinful flesh. Voila. Jesus wants men to discover their hidden potential, leading us to comprehend the full scope of the living Christ; anointed intelligence. Let’s be very clear: Satan does not want you to think.⁴ Lazy feeds misery.

Ever see the movie “The Italian Job?” They cut no corners in calculation; netted 35 million of gold bullion. How much more does the “bullion” of eternity deserve such mental investment? Maybe it’s why I am who I am, because I realized God doesn’t require book knowledge or a fancy ‘put on’. We don’t need to cheat off the false propositions of this world. God has put a vast encyclopedia inside us.²¹ It will lead us to the treasure of our destiny in Him.

In regards to God, the cheat is called religion. No thinking. Just conform. Webster’s dictionary defines religion as “a system of beliefs.” God is not a system. He is the living Father. Conforming to a system cannot generate personal revelation or an individual desire for Him.

I got a Master’s Degree from Fuller Seminary, in Pasadena, California, to make sure I learned accurate Biblical teaching from the original Greek and Hebrew (2Tim.2:15). Despite the seminary being extremely worldly and systematic, I decided to use the scholastic resources to research the popular prayer formula in contrast to the actual words of Jesus. He says, “*calculate the cost... follow Me... you must be BORN AGAIN*” (Jn.3:3,18:36). He never went around appealing to large crowds to ‘accept Him.’ In every gospel, He commands men to deny self and simply believe Him (Mt.16:24).

I discovered: Two guys named John Wesley and Charles Finney invented “the sinner’s prayer.” Back in the 1800s, “tent meetings” were a common occurrence for people to get funky religious. They concluded the gospel was a bit too difficult “for the common masses.” So they reduced salvation to a quick systematic ritual of an “altar call” and “sinner’s prayer.” Massive groups processed in seconds. Just repeat the

phrases.⁹⁷

The problem is, this can become the punch card to a counterfeit salvation and bondage to collectivism.

Will you base your eternity on a man-made formula? Is it a testimony to a religious system OR to the living Jesus? This is the most serious issue of your life. To anyone who has bowed to that salesman-like pressure-pitch to repeat a 7-word Finney-Wesley prayer formula, Jesus says you must, “come to Me.” He will use your experience if earnest sincerity is your driving force. He says, “learn from Me” (Mt.11:27-29).

Religion works for the outside, but not for the inside. I talk with countless guys who suffer in great anguish, void of the promises of Jesus. They pretend. “*Oh, I already know IT all.*” But inwardly they return to wallow in the mud and don’t know why (2Pt.2:20-22). They did what they were told. Done with God. This common mentality is the result of cheating truth. Never once did Jesus ever allude to a ritual for salvation. The Person of Jesus IS salvation.³⁶

Calculate \\kæl-kye-lāt

to reckon or determine by reasoning, evaluating with estimation and judgment. To plan or intend for a purpose.

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.”

LUKE 14:25-33



Without knowing Him, you have nothing but empty delusion. Not once did He ask for a “tithe” as if God is in need, or “sell” a package suited for human desire. He isn’t trying to shove anything down anyone’s throat.

He pulled no punches. Jesus came to impart eternal revelation of God as our Father (Jn.17). Let the truth in. Remember, I love you. You’ve got a man ‘on the inside’, me. What is present here is not my opinion. This is solid Biblical scholasticism based on accurate exegesis and explicit pericopes. If you are troubled over this exposition, it is God’s love meeting you and calling you to find answers in Him. He says “come out from amongst ‘them’ and I will welcome you” (2Cor.6:17).

actual fellowship with Jesus.^{26/44} We ask. He answers. We can replace token religion by a solemn heart of resolute faith in Scriptural authority as of GOD.

Just because someone has crowds on TV, quotes the Bible, or has a title, doesn’t mean their teaching is accurate (Mt 23:33/Mt.7:21). God says in the last days, false prophets will seek to gain fame. You cannot imagine the things I have seen done in the “Name of Jesus.” Leading others into deception ends in torment and weeping for eternity in the lake of fire (Mt.24:24/2Tim.3:1-5/Lk.12:5). No game, bro. Heavy stuff. I’m not speaking against people, but exposing malevolent spirits seducing people for wealth. Don’t criticize or condemn them. Love them. Learn what you can from anyone, but go on to Jesus.

If you think wisdom is beyond you, it’s only because you don’t know you, as God will recreate you through rebirth.²⁴ You can build a library in your mind and a fortress in your heart. But this is not a corporate endeavor. Examine the Scriptures and see how Jesus deals with *individuals*.⁹⁵ The true church is the unique outcasts in The Book of Acts (Acts 4:34).

MOTIVES

Anything real about finding God comes down to dealing with our hidden motives. Impulsive thoughts can blind our mind from seeing true motives. So they must be broken down. Calculate! A man tells God he needs a car for his grandma. In reality, his motive is to visit his girlfriend and party with his buddies. No big deal. God sees the lie and still loves the guy. Dealing with our true motives is for our sake. It is in solitude with Jesus where He shows you REAL.²⁵

Breaking down our big issues into the hidden, tiny desires, leads to monumental peace of mind.⁸⁴ God only deals with those who come down to “spirit and truth”.⁹⁴ It’s where and how God answers prayer. It’s far below our surface image. Being honest about bad motives shows God at work. Just look at David and Paul. They were able to conquer impossible things by admitting downright embarrassing and humiliating motives. It’s where God will always meet you. Bad stuff is no big deal if you’re transparent with God. Lust can suck you in, spin you around, and condemn you. Just be honest. Be real. The more you go back and forth with God, about the nooks and crannies of your thinking, the more you will see His love. What we think is so big to get beyond, shrinks. God wants YOU in spirit and truth.⁹⁴

Calculation produces a deeper set of eyes. It is discernment to see ourselves beyond our outward appearances (1Cor.2:14-15). And then

be humble. It protects you and leads you to turn complex issues into clarity of mind. The cross is not a morbid symbol, but a promise flashing, “FREEDOM FROM SELF FOUND HERE.” Calculation is where you realize you have no reason to hide motives. God sees it all and loves you, bro. Just give it to Him. Get beyond your ego (Heb.4:12).

Strip down the worst problem you have, to what, why, how, etc. Talk to God about it, knowing He loves and cares about you. Don’t give up until you can face it and say, “So what?” This is the priceless power of calculation. You’re free. Mix in some resolution and you got a fix. We can’t stop impulse fear, but we can train an attitude of reflection.

A guy once asked me how not to fall asleep when he reads the Bible. I told him get some sleep. Try again. I do it all the time. God’s Spirit awaits within the black letters on white pages. I call it pray/read. I’m talking to God while I’m reading. Start in the Gospel of John. 5 minutes of intense heart is better than an hour of meandering. While I “wait” on His Presence, I “break down” (scrutinize) Scriptural revelation.

BRAINS WORK, DESPITE THE OWNER. IT'S LIKE A CALCULATOR. IF YOU PROGRAM IN A PROBLEM IT WILL GIVE YOU THE ANSWER. NEW THOUGHTS WILL AUTOMATICALLY INSPIRE YOU.

Just like each man has an amazing backstory, so too does every parable, truth, and passage waiting to speak. When Jesus said “Come to Me”, He knew when He said that, you wouldn’t find Him in Israel as you read it.⁸⁰ He’s in the Word today. Deep calls to deep. It is the only communication of salvation. The *living* Jesus reveals the *living* Father Who sends His *living* Spirit upon the Scriptures to become *living* (Rev.1:18). I know. A lot of “livings.” You got to get beyond token religiosity to substance. Intelligent love is the gift of the Incarnation. Chisel away day by day, just you and God. Work your way off your SELF and into the Word. Failure is not occasional. We exist in a fallen nature, but can live by His Word. I do not operate off of a success/failure index, but faith.

So, brother, before you head into the yard or cafeteria, do a bit of calculation on who you want to become.⁸³ Drink a few sips of “living water.” Drop into a deeper level. Build your own DOC: Department of Calculation. Reflect a noble man with noble plans and an Extraordinary Outcast.

CALCULATION IS THE DEEPEST LEVEL OF PRAYER. IT IS IN THE HONEST SEARCH, BENEATH IMPULSIVE THOUGHTS AND EXTERNAL WORDS, FOR HIDDEN MOTIVES AND DESIRES, WHERE WE RECOGNIZE HIS PRESENCE IS IN THE TRUTH THAT IS SETTING US FREE.

Instead of one generic act and superficial Bible knowledge, Jesus calls you to find individual destiny in revelation of His Holy Spirit, in contemplative study.³⁵ A personal, Heart-to-heart journey. When we get upset over God-issues, it is due to our lack of understanding how His vast dimensions of love unfold as we surrender. The cross is the fountainhead of dreams for a new life. It is a transformation, not an upgraded rehabilitation. It renders us



Letting The Light In

& Understanding the "Why?"

WRITTEN BY SARAH JOY

*Actual photo of my hospital window

For over three years, I dealt with intense stomach pain, bone-deep fatigue, and other bizarre symptoms. That's a lot of nights, alone in the dark, with my body in turmoil and my mind struggling to sort it all out: "Why, Lord... what is happening to me?" But while I may not have fully understood the "why?", I knew Who was, and is, by my side through all of it. And it was this knowledge of God and His profound, personal love for me, that kept my heart on track when everything in my body just seemed "off".

So, after all that time in suspense, I was overwhelmed with relief and gratitude when I finally heard the words: *"It's SO big, no wonder you're dealing with all that!"* The doctor was shaking her head in shock and disbelief, as she pointed to a scan of a 7 lb. tumor the size of a football sitting in my stomach, compressing my organs. *Unreal.* She told me I needed a dangerous operation, almost as risky as heart surgery, to remove it. But nothing could diminish the joy I felt in finally starting to understand what was going on. There was a lot I still didn't know, but I did know that, in it all, my Father would carry me through. *So, despite everything, I slept like a rock that night.*

After waiting months for a surgery slot, the day finally arrived. When I was on the operating table, I realized I could lower my heart rate at will and set off the monitor alarms. Hee, Hee. Everyone jumped. And then we all laughed when they realized I was doing it on purpose. I was surprised by my own lack of fear. To me, this was living proof of the power of His love. I remember thinking *'I guess I really do have eternal life.'* The operation, normally 4 hrs., took over 7. The tumor had gotten so large, they had to move really slow, so as not to damage other organs.

I'll never forget waking up the morning after and feeling the warm, dawn light stream through the window, onto my face. I was so grateful. The knowledge of God's personal love is like that glowing light. It changes how we see everything and brings us remarkable understanding, clarity, and comfort. My precious friend, this understanding is multi-dimensional. It reaches into every aspect of our being: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. God yearns to reach you with that same light, right here, through my story.

In less than a year, my family was hit by 4 life-changing, emergency surgeries. One hit after the next. We spent weeks in hospitals and waiting rooms. All these experiences sensitized us to the multitudes all around us, devastated by physical, mental, and emotional trauma. Everyone. Everywhere.

In each circumstance of suffering, all humanity shares this same underlying groan *"WHY?"*. *"Is God doing this to me? What is happening? Why does God allow this?"* Even Jesus Himself cried out *"WHY, Father, are you doing this to Me?"*¹²⁰ Think about that. Jesus actually felt all our cries, most importantly, our deep aloneness. Because, in that moment, Jesus bore all sin, answering everyone's question: Why do we suffer? Because sin rules this world.¹

There are 8 billion people in the world who crave understanding of their suffering. I shared my 3rd world hospital room with 7 of them. The woman in the bed next to mine, Mala, kept vomiting from her pain. She said *"I can't help but wonder 'Why is God punishing me like this?'"* I was thrilled to share my heart and watch, as what I explained, brought her tangible relief and comfort.



Society perpetuates the lie that this world belongs to God and that a good God wouldn't let bad things happen. So, when you suffer, you conclude that God is either against you or that He's cruel. But the Scriptures emphatically declare that this world actually belongs to the devil.^{4/5/7} Read 1 John 5:19-20.

It is Satan and this world that are against you. He tries to use all the bad things that happen to you to turn you against God. But God is, and always will be, for you. *"God is not like some sinister Puppet Master, who delights in our pain,"* I told Mala. *"Rather, Jesus showed us that He is a compassionate Father Who can use it to help us know Him."*^{18/19}

My dear brother, or sister, God does not side with society, against you, in putting you in prison. But His love can turn it to your good.¹⁰⁶ Suffering is neither random, nor punishment. There are so many factors, choices, and consequences in life that cause us pain, confusion, and fear. We can't possibly unravel them all to get a cut-and-dry explanation, "this happened because of that." And the answers we're looking for aren't even in the resolution of a specific situation. But, beyond everything, we *can* find understanding in *all* situations through the personal knowledge of God, revealed in Jesus. His answer to all our cries is mind-blowing, life-altering, eternal love.³⁶ *"God so loved the world..."*⁴⁷

When I was a little, I knew without a doubt how much my mom and dad loved me. So when bad things happened, that assurance of their love brought me a comfort and understanding that I could rely on in any situation. Likewise, when you really know how much God loves you, it establishes a bedrock of assurance within you, upon which you can trust and believe His Lordship, despite your circumstances.

ALL YOUR 'UNKNOWN'S' WILL FADE IN LIGHT OF THE ONE THING YOU CAN KNOW FOR CERTAIN...THAT GOD IS FOR YOU. PS. 56:9

Jesus says, "In this world, you will have trouble. But take courage, I have overcome the world"⁷⁵. Our "why?" is resolved in Who He has proven Himself to be; compassionate, kind, good, and so grand that He conquered the whole world... for you. And He promises to come to you so that this "knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding" in all things.²¹

It's been over a year now, and I'm still recovering. But just as on that bright, warm morning after surgery, I find absolute peace and contentment in knowing Who I have believed. I don't have to know the exact "why?" of all I go through (2Tim.1:12). It's this peace, that "surpasses understanding,"⁸⁴ that I pray for you, an opening of your window that allows His warm, golden Light to stream through.

HAND CRAFTED WITH HEART



Everything we offer we have created ourselves specifically with you in our mind, heart, and thoughtful prayers.

MUSIC EXPERIENCE:

We have created and released two new albums of music specifically for those incarcerated. The albums span various genres from electronic to rock to chill and ambient, in essence they create a genre of their own. With sounds and frequencies written to both motivate and calm, our music will feed your heart and lift your spirit. Search for: Lift by Deep Heart

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www.deepheartworldtour.com/video

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A special book that Ruth wrote and illustrated to help children who have an incarcerated parent or loved one understand, and deal with the complex issues involved. Search "Extra Love by Ruth Mercy" on Amazon for the paperback and Kindle e-book version. This and other very special children's books are also available on our website.



Deep Heart is a small, family-run, 501c3 public charity. We do not profit any money from this publication or any of our work. Rather, we have worked long hours at various jobs to fund this from our savings so that we can offer as much as possible to as many as possible. If you'd like to get in touch with us or would like us to perform at your facility, please visit: DeepHeartWorldTour.com

Answer Key: RIDDLES: 1. Wolf first, then a sheep, leave the sheep, take wolf, leave wolf, take sheep, then wolf. 2. The future 3. Fire 4. A Window. 5. A shadow 6. Time 7. The horizon 8. A River 9. Footsteps 10. A promise 11. The Moon 12. A Library 13. A Mirror. 14. An Echo 15. A Joke 16. A Cloud 17. Your breath 18. Post Office 19. A Candle :~| WHO AM I? 1. Joseph 2. Paul 2. David 3. Jesus | # Of Keys In The Extraordinary Outcasts Design: 13



SCRIPTURE REFERENCES & STUDY

The Scriptures referenced throughout the magazine are listed here by number.

Example: "44" would be Galatians 2:20. Also, use this as a topical study to help you get into the Word.

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|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Why do bad things happen? | 35. The Holy Spirit can help you: | 69. Mark 2:17/John 3:17 |
| 2. 1John 2:15/5:19 | 36. Jn.14:1-18+26/15:26/16:7 | 70. Luke 5:8-10 |
| 3. James 4:4 | 37. Romans 8:15-27 | 71. How to be the greatest: |
| 4. 2Corinthians 4:4 | 38. 1John 2:27 | 72. Matthew 18:2-4 |
| 5. John 12:31/16:33/18:36 | 39. Luke 11:13 | 73. James 4:6 |
| 6. John 16:11/17:14-16 | 40. Acts 1:8/Ephesians 1:17 | 74. Isaiah 57:15/66:2 |
| 7. Luke 4:6 | 41. Galatians 5:5-6:22 | 75. 1Peter 5:5-6 |
| 8. Why we do the things we don't want to do: | 42. 1Corinthians 15:45 | 76. Luke 22:26-27 |
| 9. Romans 3:10-18 | 43. The Practical Work of the Cross: | 77. John 13:13-17/Acts 20:35 |
| 10. Romans 7:7-25 | 44. Galatians 2:20-21 | 78. 1John 4:20 |
| 11. Ephesians 2:12-22 | 45. 1Peter 3:18 | 79. Dealing with Depression: |
| 12. John 3:19-21 | 46. Isaiah 53:1-12/ Ephesians 5:2 | 80. Matthew 11:25-29 |
| 13. Isaiah 59:9-15 | 47. John 3:14-16/Num.21:9 | 81. John 10:10 |
| 14. Discovering the Love of the Father: | 48. Matthew 10:38/16:24-26 | 82. Matthew 6:9-34 |
| 15. Mark 14:36/Galatians 4:4-7 | 49. 1Corinthians 1:18-29 | 83. John 7:17+37 |
| 16. Hebrews 2:10-18 | 50. Colossians 1:13-22 | 84. Philippians 4:6-13 |
| 17. Romans 10:9-10 | 51. Hebrews 7:23-28 | 85. John 6:35 |
| 18. Romans 5:8 | 52. Galatians 3:13 | 86. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 |
| 19. John 16:27 | 53. Philippians 2:5-11 | 87. Healing relationships: |
| 20. 1John 4:10-19 | 54. Matt.26:38-39 | 88. Matthew 18:21-35 |
| 21. Prov. 9:10/ Romans 1:19-20 | 55. Finding real forgiveness: | 89. Luke 6:27-35 |
| 22. Psalms 19:1 | 56. Micah 7:19/Acts 3:19 | 90. Colossians 2:3/ 3:12-24 |
| 23. Understanding how to change: | 57. Romans 4:1-17 | 91. Matthew 25:35 |
| 24. John 3:3-8 | 58. Colossians 1:14/2:13-15 | 92. Matthew 5:44, 6:14 |
| 25. Matthew 7:7 | 59. Psalms 32:1/ 130:3-4 | 93. The true church vs hypocrisy: |
| 26. Phil.3:7-14 | 60. Hebrews 7:27/9:12/10:1-22 | 94. John 4:24 |
| 27. Luke 15:11-32 | 61. Why God does not expect us to try to be a "good person" | 95. Acts 17:24 |
| 28. Luke 18:10-14 | 62. Romans 3:20-28 | 96. John 9:39 |
| 29. Isaiah 55:6-11 | 63. Galatians 2:16,21 + 3:10-11 | 97. Mark 7:6 |
| 30. Luke 14:26-33 | 64. Romans 1:17/Galatians 3:29 | 98. Matthew 7:24-27 |
| 31. Psalms 51:1-19 | 65. Mark 10:18 | 99. John 14:23 |
| 32. Micah 6:8 | 66. Romans 8:1-8 | 100. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 |
| 33. Matthew 17:20/Mark 9:23 | 67. Romans 10:4-13 | 101. John 2:19 |
| 34. Romans 6:21-23 | 68. John 16:9 | 102. The hidden reward in suffering: |
| | | 103. Romans 5:3-6 |
| | | 104. 1Peter 1:6-9 |

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THE GIFT

I TOSS AND TURN THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT,
AND WISH THAT THINGS WOULD BE ALL RIGHT.
MY HEART TOO HEAVY FOR ME TO LIFT,
UNTIL I OPENED A PRECIOUS GIFT,
AS IF WRAPPED IN A BOX AND TIED WITH A BOW,
WAS A GIFT MORE SPECIAL THAN I COULD KNOW.
HERE IN MY HANDS WAS THE KEY TO LIVE,
SO I GAVE MYSELF THE GIFT "FORGIVE".
DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHO WAS RIGHT OR WRONG,
IF I COULD HEAL THE WOUND THAT'S BLEED SO LONG?
I'D RATHER SAY WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID,
THEN REGRET IT ALL ON MY DEATHBED.
HURTFUL MOMENTS OF TIME GONE BY,
THAT ALWAYS LEFT A HEAVY SIGH,
COULD FINALLY BE RESOLVED AT LAST,
AND FADE AWAY TO DISTANT PAST.
WHO CARES ABOUT THE "WHEN" OR "WHY",
AS MY ONLY LIFE IS GOING BY.
SO I DECIDED I WOULD LIVE,
AND OPENED THE GIFT: "FORGIVE".

Ruth


SOME OF OUR FAVORITE CLASSIC FILMS:

Great to request if you have a movie night.

The Fountainhead (1943)	Les Miserables (1935)	Somebody Up There Likes Me (1956)
Mr Deeds Goes To Town (1936)	San Francisco (1936)	It Happened on Fifth Avenue
The Great Sinner (1949)	Citizen Kane (1941)	Boom Town (1940)
Madame X (1966)	Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (1958)	The Hoodlum Priest (1961)
Boys Town (1938)	Meet John Doe (1941)	House Of Strangers (1949)

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 105. James 1:12 | 121. Matthew 22:15 |
| 106. Rom.8:28-39 | 122. John 10:20/Isaiah 50:6-9 |
| 107. Luke 6:20-23 | 123. Mark 15:29-32 |
| 108. 1Peter 2:19-25 | 124. Psalms 22:1-24/69:21 |
| 109. 2 Cor.12:9/Romans 8:17-18 | 125. Justice of God |
| 110. Hebrews 4:15 | 126. Romans 12:19-21 |
| 111. Hebrews 11:1, 6, 24 | 127. Luke 18:6-8 |
| 112. Growing Salvation within: | 128. Matthew 10:25-31 |
| 113. Mark 4:3-32 | 129. 1Corinthians 4:3-5 |
| 114. Luke 14:26-35 | 130. Thought Replacement Therapy: |
| 115. Matthew 11:12, 17:20 | 131. Matthew 4:4 |
| 116. Genesis 15:5-6 | 132. Romans 10:9-10 |
| 117. John 12:24-25 | 133. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 |
| 118. Suffering of Jesus | 134. Romans 12:2 |
| 119. 2Corinthians 5:21 | 135. Colossians 3:2 |
| 120. Matthew 27:46 | |



I SEE THE DAWN OF A NEW PATH
WHERE I WALK AWAY FROM
BITTERNESS AND SORROW
A PATH UNSEEN BY EYE
BUT TRAVELED BY HEART
CALL IT TRUST
CALL IT HOPE
IT CALLS TO ME
I AM UNBOUND.