

The Overcomer's Christ

December 2015



OTA 10'

Painting by Dr. Tom Anderson



REFLECTIONS By Wade Anderson

Hello everyone and Merry Christmas!

I know that this time of year, as Thanksgiving and Christmas roll around, can sometimes cause us all to **reflect** and feel alone. Even though you may not be with your families right now we want you all to know that your **Overcomers for Christ** family is always here. We decided this year to gather some others from the church body to send some of their love your way as well. Your church family doesn't just consist of **OSCS** but of **MANY** others that pray for and support this ministry in many different ways throughout the body of Christ. Together we all wish you a very Merry Christmas

In **Psalm 103:2**, David is encouraging himself when he says, **"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits ..."** Then in **Psalm 105:5** David again says, **"Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles, ..."** So what does this mean? Well, we all know what great affect our natural senses have on our memories. Meaning, just a simple smell in the air or taste of something and the pages of our memories will begin to roll back through the years and events until it connects the two together again. When David was saying **"forget not"** he was actually telling himself to reflect back and remember what God has already been faithful in doing in our lives to date. And seeing as how God is the same yesterday, today and forever what He has been faithful in doing He will continue to be and do! God caring for and loving us doesn't hinge on whether we are good all of the time or not. God loves unconditionally and He sees us through the Blood of Jesus.

Then as we look back over in **Psalm 103:3-6** again we see that David begins to make a short list of things to remind himself of: 1) He forgives ALL of our sins, 2) He heals ALL our diseases, 3) He has redeemed our lives from the pit, 4) He crowns us with love and compassion, 5) He satisfies our desires with good things, 6) He renews us to our youth like the eagles, 7) He works righteousness and justice for ALL the oppressed.

Now I don't know about all of you but for myself, when I reflect back to what and where my life was even 10 years ago my memory doesn't paint such a great picture. But when I move those memory pages up a couple of years and reflect on even that very first day that Jesus came into my life my heart is filled with joy to even the point of happy tears. As we reflect and remember ALL that Christ has done in us, for us and through us I believe those things alone should cause us to, **"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name, make known among the nation's what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of ALL His wonderful acts."** (Psalm 105:1-2)

So whenever you're days don't seem to be so great don't allow the enemy to steal your joy, instead let me encourage you to sit down for a minute or two and begin to reflect back on the situations that Jesus has been there for you, the things that He has helped you change in yourselves the things you never could seem to change on your own and ALL the times He has simply comforted you where nothing else could. At that point I believe you will begin to truly understand that you're NEVER alone! He has NOT left you nor will He ever!

Celebrate this Christmas knowing that you are not alone, Jesus is always with you, and so is the love and encouragement of your **Overcomers for Christ** family. We love you and you are in our hearts.

All Of Our Days Count

By Arthur L.

When brother 'Duck' came at me asking me to write something hopeful and encouraging for this Christmas issue of the newsletter I was delighted. So I prayed about it and, well, this is what the Holy Spirit gave me.

I can recall just eight and a half months ago standing in the Sally port full of hope, joy and nervous anticipation as I said farewell to my long time companions on the morning of my parole date. It seemed as if though I'd spent the better part of the last decade of my life in limbo waiting to rejoin society and the free world as if my life would begin again once I was free from my incarceration. When in reality my life began again when I was born again and I gave my life to Jesus Christ in November 2010.

I said all of that to say this; although the days of incarceration are some of the most difficult and trying times in our lives, they are still inclusive and count among the days of our lives. The point is to make those days count for Christ and the Kingdom of God!

There are so many men among you, who are still there doing their time, and others who have gone on to see their parole who God used to help shape and mold me for what He is doing in my life even now! So, I for one thank God for D.O.C. and all that He was able to do in and through my life while I had to be there.

The Word says we are to redeem the time because the days are evil. God has afforded us the luxury of sparing our lives and separating us from our environment and setting us apart so that we might hear His voice. I know I'm not the only man/woman among us who has heard His voice calling in their lives. The calling is from God, the blessing is found in the

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response of each man/woman's heart. The Scripture says, **"Repent therefore, that converted. So that your sins may be blotted out and times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."** (Acts 3:19) Brothers and sisters that doesn't sound too bad to me! Times of refreshing is as welcome as the first day of Spring after a long hard Winter! After years of suffering at our own hand, behind the consequences of our own sin!

I said all of that to say this; brothers and sister's DO NOT waste the days you have been afforded to separate yourselves from this world. Instead, set yourselves apart for God's purpose in your life!

Fund raisers, commissary and visits never seem to come around quickly enough, but in the free world life comes at you like a falling ton of bricks at times. So, use the time you have there to draw close to Jesus. Learn of Him, begin to know Him, search for more of His character and His nature. Let the mindset that was in Christ Jesus be in you. Let His Spirit lead you and guide you in all that you do. In a healthy and simple prayer life and time spent in the Word of God you will not only find yourself closer to Jesus, but you will find that you know Him. It's a simple choice that leads to life, and life more abundantly! Brothers and sisters do not waste these days of your incarceration, the days of your life, they all count.

You want to know what one of the earmarks of a true disciple is? It's that when the disciple speaks and acts it is obvious to the world that this man/woman has been with Christ!

Today, I have been free from that old prison for eight and a half months. I praise God for ALL that He has done and is doing even now. I am attending a little bilingual Pentecostal church near my home. God has blessed my life in restoring my relationship with my children and other estranged family members. I have friends that love me and a wonderful job. I'm blessed with cars, 2 Harley Davidson motorcycles and the little things that give me joy. But the most important thing He has blessed me with is the opportunity to be a witness to the life changing power of Jesus Christ, before men! Love to you all in Christ, AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

By Tracy and Deb K.

"She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus (the Greek form of the Hebrew word Joshua, which means Savior), for He will save His people from their sins (that is, prevent them from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God)." (Matthew 1:21 Amplified)

WOW! I don't know about you, but I love this translation! He will prevent us from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God!

He is the true end, He is the scope of life and He is the reason for the Christmas season ... may we always keep that in our hearts and on our minds. God gave His greatest Gift to us on that first Christmas day and may the wonder of that Gift always guide and light your way!

Merry Christmas to ALL the Overcomers for Christ Family! And may God richly bless you all!

Merry Christmas

By The Chilson Family

Greetings and blessings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

Hello brothers and sisters on the 'Inside'. I just wanted to take a minute and let you all know that through these next holiday months you are NOT forgotten. Not only are my family and I constantly thinking of the ones who are away from their families during this season, but our heavenly Father is with you, He loves you and He will NEVER forsake you. As you are reading this short greeting remember to pass it on to others as well.

In **Galatians 3:26** we read, ***"For you all are sons (and daughters) of God through faith in Christ Jesus."*** Don't forget that in the body of Christ we are all together, so pass it on. You may have an opportunity sitting right next to you just waiting for the Word of God to be introduced to them. Keep spreading the Good News while keeping in mind **Romans 3:28**. ***"So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law."*** Keep your eyes focused on the Father and stay on your knees because that's what makes the enemy afraid and weak. Merry Christmas from Cory of Cory's Corner.

Hello Amazing people. How are you all doing? You probably know that Christmas is right around the corner. Do you know what Christmas truly is? It's the day we celebrate Jesus' birthday! Don't forget to tell Him Happy Birthday!!! I pray all of you will get some Christmas blessing. Anyways, I just wanted to say hello and remind you all of the true meaning of Christmas. Make sure you keep your eyes focused on God, both in and out of there. God bless you and have a Merry Christmas. ... K.C.

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Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done **Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

Prayer Requests

As I am writing this letter to you, I am in S.H.U. (the hole), for some drugs that were found in my cell mates bunk, but they locked all three of us up and gave us "write ups", so I'm stressing over that. Look, I never knew the guy had any drugs. The Lord knows I didn't know about them. So, please pray for my situation. I've been gone 13 years and have never had a dirty drug screen or been busted with drugs in jail. I am getting short, I go home next year and I ain't going to have drugs near me that could keep me here any longer. I have an urge so bad to go home. My people are dying, getting old and everything else, I just want to be with them. So, please pray for my situation and have everyone you can pray for me also.

Well, since being in the hole, I have been reading my Bible and reading a book by Charles Stanley, I want so badly to be back living in righteousness for the Lord. Well, an old Tennessee boy needs prayer. Also, I have a friend named Alexander who is struggling with some issues, so have everyone pray for him and my family. I want to thank you all for your service and dedication to the Lord ... **J.T.**

I have a very desperate prayer request. My mom is 88 years old and the only family I have. I am 58 now. I have been given a large sentence. My mom is desperately trying to talk to the governor. Her testimony will set me free. My case is not on appeal because out of fear I took a plea. But if she can get through to the governor I might be able to go home. Please pray that we receive a breakthrough. I know what the Lord has for me to do upon release. Without a miracle from God, I will not be released. Please put me on your prayer request. I am so afraid but I know God is not the God of fear. Ole satan is really tormenting me daily. I need your prayers so much. I won't give up. Thank you so much ... **J.M.**

I ask you to keep me and my family in your prayers for restoration, peace, and health ... **A.G.**

Please keep me in your prayers to stay on the right path! Please pray for my mother's hands and feet. She is 70 years old and still works at Fry's store. She is a very Christian lady ... **J.M.**

I ask for prayer for my granddaughter, she has a sickness that they are not taking into consideration. I saw her and she had a spell so she was taken to medical but they don't know what is wrong with her. Please pray for her ... **M.G.**

Please keep me and my family in your prayers. Currently, my youngest of children has been put in foster care and I fear that I'll lose her. Pray that her mother gets her act together ... **K.P.**

This is by far the worst yard that I have been on. Lots of negative people, lots of drugs, and all the stuff that goes along with them. Please pray for me and ask God to make this last year go fast. Can't wait to see you guys face-to-face. God bless you all ... **M.S.**

Praise Reports

God has truly blessed me this month. I have received two letters from my sister who I haven't heard from in over a year. I was really glad to hear from her. She's the one person in my family that I am close to and due to various health issues, I worry about her a lot. She's 363 days younger than I am. So for two days every year we're the same age. HA!HA!

Pretty crazy ... **Foot**

First of all, sorry for my writing, but I'm writing with a stick. We do not have pencil or pens herein the hole. I'm writing about your newsletter I received, at a time of need. I was on suicide watch because my momma just passed of cancer, and I was going through a lot. My whole life stopped, after that I stopped getting mail, money, and pictures, that's important here in jail. So, like I said, "I was done with life." But out of nowhere I received a newsletter on June 8th, how did that happen because: 1) I couldn't receive mail because I was on suicide watch, but they gave it to me anyway; 2) The address on the newsletter is wrong, it says Oklahoma City, OK and I'm in West Virginia; and 3) I didn't ask for the newsletter, but thank God for it and Mrs. Michelle, Mr. John and the rest of your team of people. When I got the July newsletter, the address was still wrong, but I'm not on suicide watch anymore. I'm in the hole waiting transfer to another jail. But I said to myself, "God is trying to tell me something, and He used Mr. Duck and the A-team to tell me." ... **D.S.**

Say brother \$Cash\$, it was great to get your card with the kind inspiring words! I will remember you and your unique name. I can hardly wait to turn off of Lindsey Rd. and onto Brown Rd. then I'll be like 3/4 of a mile from my favorite church, Living Word Bible Church. You all run a great service there at Living Word and I'll never forget a Valentine's Day in 2013 when I was there. Your church offers free child care after the evening service, so that the parents can have what they call 'Date Night'. This service allows those that attend the evening service to leave their children there at the church where they're also fed while the couples go and have an evening together without the children. That's their vision, building strong homes and families. Boy, if only I'd listened to my heart instead of my messed up mind at that time! But you know what? My relationship with our God is better NOW than ever before. Let me tell a 'funny' story. I'm working at an animal shelter six days a week and praise God the weeks are flying by. So anyway, I'm digging in my box of old mail looking for one of the cards you all had sent me. Reason being, for some reason I'd stopped getting the newsletters and so wanted to receive them again. All of a sudden POW! BOOM! BANG! I find one of your newsletters and then not even four minutes pass and what do you know ... another NEW newsletter came sliding under my door! Boy GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME ... **K.P.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Thank You to D&S
By M.S.

I would like to thank you all at D&S for all your hard work and dedication you put in the creation and distribution of your monthly newsletter. It is truly a blessing to receive your newsletter and your spiritual guidance. After all my studying lately, I don't do much reading anymore. But there is one thing I can't wait to receive and read, and that's your newsletter. I really appreciate the humility you guys have, giving our Lord all the glory. There have been little things I've picked up like looking at life as an adventure not a journey.

I really enjoyed Wade's testimony, the only part that sucked was waiting for the next issue to come. I was very surprised to learn that Foot is an inmate like myself, it just never occurred to me and really showed me there is work to be done for Christ behind these walls. In one of my first newsletters I received, July 2013, there was a poem called *31 Days of Prayer for My Mama*, when I read it I cried, it was beautiful. That has been the only clipping I've taken out of your newsletters because I like to share them whole. Every time I've read the poem, my eyes fill full of tears and I feel the love.

There was another beautiful memorial for Dolores Ann Mankin and I think it's such an honor to your loved ones memorial when you publish a celebration of their life in your newsletter. I believe I'm not the only one of your D&S family that prayed for you in your time of mourning and is keeping you and your loved ones in prayer.

I also read in March 2015 in *What Others Are Saying* section that someone asking to be put on your mailing list, and I remember thinking, I know where he's getting at when I realized that is what I believe I wrote in March 2013, and I am grateful to have been put on your mailing list. I want to thank you for all your love and support, it's been a blessing to be a part of your ministry and want you all to know what a positive impact you've had on my life. I'm sending all my love and prayers.

LOVE, IN CHRIST
By C.G.

First, I want to thank you all there at the *Overcomers for Christ* for your thoughtfulness in the remembrance of my birthday. The contribution you all extend to the community of believers is humbling. Your vision to reach out to the lost and the saved are not going unnoticed.

I have been incarcerated almost 11 years. I was convicted of second degree murder. The Lord has shown much grace to me over the years of my life, yes, even when I was in darkness. I'm sure you've heard the saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Well, an addition was added that says, "Though you can't make him drink, when he thirsts he will know where to go to get some water." Likewise, God's Word NEVER returns void, but WILL ALWAYS accomplish its purpose wherever He has sent it. The words He gave you are being sown for His Kingdom. Some seeds bring forth its fruit sooner than others, glory to God the harvest is coming!

Listen to one of the amazing truths I read today in *Colossians 1:22* (NIV), "**But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.**" As I read this the word "now" lifted my spirit. Its pretense and the phrase "**in His sight**" caused me to shout! Right NOW God sees me holy, blameless and above reproach because of Jesus. The freedom to know that God sees me this way is not because I don't sin, BUT because of what was done to Jesus on my behalf.

There are so many of you brothers and sisters out there that struggle in your flesh. My prayer to/for you all is that you may know, even with your struggles, the TRUTH in *Colossians 1:22* still belongs to you! God sees you, **in Christ, "holy, blameless and without reproach."** And we who have been set free from certain struggles of the flesh, let 'us' help the others to see that their 'righteousness and grace' is secured **in Christ** so that they may receive and KNOW the revelation of His grace and love has ALREADY set them free as well.

I found that when I tried to do what God's Word said, I was focused on obedience to the law of God. But the day came, I needed the revelation of God's love for me and the righteousness I obtained **through Christ** apart from the law. Now, the transformation has come as I beheld the 'finished work' of Christ. Even as I face each struggle; **in Him**, freedom comes. Strength comes NOT by our flesh, but by the Spirit that is at work in us. AMEN?! May God continually guide each of us to be a light house for His glory!

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Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Green Thumb

By J.H.

Let me start off with a poem that I wrote called Green Thumb.

I can only plant the seeds, the growth is on Him,
I can tend the soil tho, my light discourage the weeds.
My actions way louder than my words,
The conduct of my walk, poison the worms.
Physically go get the water, don't wait for the rain,
When a plant withers away, let God take the pain.
Planted in good soil, Living Water runs beneath me,
Studied up with God inside, true love and peace,
No need for pesticides!

Now let me explain what I mean by all of this:

When I say, "I can only plant the seeds" what I mean by that is sharing the Word of God with people, telling them about the love of Jesus, that's my job and spiritual maturity in God will increase.

When I say, "I can tend the soil," means I can be checking up on a brother/sister, spend time with him/her, relating with him/her and reading the Word of God with them.

When I say, "Let my light discourage the weeds" means I remember what the Bible tells me, "Don't put a lamp under a table, or a city on a hill cannot be hidden." The way that I see it is, by me spending quality time with a new brother/sister, negative people may stay away from them. THE POWER OF GOD IS REAL!

When I say, "Let the conduct of my walk poison the worms," means I'm saying the worms of doubt will eat the plant and kill it. But when a new brother sees me, an ex-gangbanger, walking upright and with peace and love he then gains confidence and before long he can begin to do it to.

When I say, "I don't wait for the rain" means that I know I need to put in more effort and believe me I need to work on that. That could be as simple as walking up to a random brother (or sister) and saying, "Jesus loves you." I do that but I know I need to do more. Inviting them to meetings is the putting in work part for me. And when I see a new brother backslide or give up instead of getting hurt or mad, cause it will hurt, that's where I just give that pain to God.

At the end I define my walk. The "No need for pesticides" are the unnatural things that help plants grow. Just like when we see brothers (or sisters) feel temporary joy from drugs or drinking they may give you temporary joy but that too is short lived as it all begins to turn unhealthy.

Glory Gifts

By M.G.

Let me fill you with My love, joy, and peace. These are glory gifts, flowing from My living Presence. Though you are an earthly vessel, I designed you to be filled with heavenly contents. Your weakness is not a deterrent to being filled with My Spirit! On the contrary, it provides an opportunity for My power to shine forth more brightly.

As you go through this day, trust Me to provide the strength that you need moment by moment. Don't waste energy wondering whether you are adequate for today's journey. My Spirit within you is more than sufficient to handle whatever this may bring. That is the basis for your confidence! In quietness (spending time alone with Me) and confident trust (relying on My sufficiency) is your strength.

Quote Worthy

"God does not do anything with us, only through us."

- Oswald Chambers (July 24, 1874 - November 15, 1917) was an early twentieth-century Scottish Baptist and Holiness Movement evangelist and teacher, best known for the devotional My Utmost for His Highest.

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2 Kings 9:14-10:31

Peace, properly understood, comes from God. It is not genuine except when rooted in belief in God and love for Him. Don't seek peace and friendship with those who are enemies of the good and the true. Lasting peace can come only from knowing God who gives it to us. **(9:18-19)**

We are to be completely intolerant of sin and remove it from our lives. We should be tolerant of people who hold differing views, but we should not condone beliefs or practices that lead people away from God. **(10:24)**

Acts 16:16-17:34

Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, and placed in stocks in the inner cell. Despite this dismal situation, they praised God, praying and singing as the other prisoners listened. No matter what our circumstances, we should praise God. Others may come to Christ because of our example. **(16:22-25)**

You may not receive much attention (in fact, you may receive only grief) for your service for Christ. But God wants to use you. Lives will be changed because of your courage and faithfulness. **(17:6)**

Today, we have a "Christian" society, but to most people, God is still unknown, we need to proclaim who He is and make clear what He did for everyone through His Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot assume that even religious people around us truly know Jesus or understand the importance of faith in Him. **(17:23)**

Psalms 143:1-144:15

David was losing hope, caught in paralyzing fear and deep depression. At times, we feel caught in deepening depression and are unable to pull ourselves out. At those times, we can come to the Lord and, like David, express our true feelings. Then we will find help as we remember His works **(143:5)**, reach out to Him in prayer **(143:6)**, trust Him **(143:8)**, and seek to do His will **(143:10)**.

David's prayer was to be taught to do God's will, not his own. A prayer for guidance is self-centered if it does not recognize God's power to redirect our life. Asking God to restructure our priorities awakens our minds and stirs our will. **(143:10)**


Because life is short, live for God while you have the time. Don't waste your life by selecting an inferior purpose that has no lasting value. Only God can make your life worthwhile, purposeful, and meaningful. **(144:3-4)**

Proverbs 17:26-28

This proverb tells us that it is wrong for believers to be fined or punished for being good and honest. What kind of message does that send if we get into trouble every time we obey God? That's a terrible thing. **(17:26)**

This proverb highlights several benefits of keeping quiet: 1) It is the best policy if you have nothing worthwhile to say. 2) It allows the opportunity to listen and learn. 3) It gives you something in common with those who are wiser.

So that when you do speak, you will have something important to say. **(17:27-28)**

 **"Foot" Notes**

Circumstances and situations ... we all know too well that left to our own devices these can spin out of control too fast and more times than not we let our circumstances and situations control our lives.

What we need to do is trust in God, because God is the only One Who can change circumstances and situations. What we can change is our perception of our circumstances or situations, because no matter what we're going through it could be worse. It's all about perception.

Love to ya'll short and tall ... Vaya con Dios ... Don't ride faster than your angels can fly.

REFLECTIONS

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Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ! The holiday seasons are upon us once again and I hope that this newsletter finds you in good health. I am sending you all this little message to hopefully lift your spirits and remind you that you are not forgotten, you are LOVED!!! My prayer for you is that your lives be blessed abundantly and that you feel the presence of the Lord all around you. Merry Christmas ... **Melissa C.**

Keep Christ in Christmas!

By John and Courtney Dobbins

Well it's almost 2016 and we can't believe how fast this year has flown by. This is the time of the year that we usually reflect and give thanks for all that we have and to the people who we share our life with. Let us start off by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. It's always so busy around this time of year so be sure to enjoy it with family and friends.

It seems like a life time ago when we first got involved with the **O&C** prison ministry back in 2008. We have seen how **O&C** has grown over the past years and have seen how this ministry has impacted and helped so many. Wade Anderson wrote "The BOOK That Changed the World" a couple of years ago, the message was about how Jesus becomes even more meaningful this time of year. This gives us perspective on what He did for us without asking for anything in return. We know you have heard this before, but we truly want to thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts for the part that you play in the **Overcomers for Christ** prison ministry. Without you and what you do all of this would not be possible and we wouldn't be able to reach people that need hope and the **WORD**. Your loyal support allows us the chance to help others, ourselves, and our families.

So put on your Armor and continue onward on the road that we have agreed to walk together side by side. Going into the next year let us continue helping those around us, be it with a helping hand, a smile when needed, sharing with the hurting, or anything that makes a difference in their life.

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." Isaiah 9:6-7

Let us remember the real meaning and keep Christ in Christmas!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

By Michelle Anderson

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas. I love Christmas, I love to give gifts and see the joy on my kids' and grand-kids' face. Since, I have gotten saved there is another gift I like to give ... a much greater gift than anything material ... the gift of God's love ... His Son, Jesus!!!

For many of us Christmas can evoke many different emotions ... surprise, joy, love, laughter, sadness, loneliness, or disappointment. We experience this range of emotions because our focus is on what our loved ones get us or don't get us, or who sends me a card or doesn't send me a card, or other material, worldly things. When we change our focus to the reason for the season ... Jesus Christ ... then we can only have positive feelings ... love, joy, acceptance, and fellowship. There are many scriptures that show that the Lord is always with us:

Psalm 27:10 - "Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close."

1 Samuel 12:22 - "The LORD will not abandon his people, because that would dishonor his great name. For it has pleased the LORD to make you his very own people."

Psalm 68:5-6 - "Father to the fatherless, defender of widows-this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; He sets the prisoners free and gives them joy ..."


Psalm 147:3 - "He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."

No matter, if you are behind bars or out here, you do not have to feel alone this season. Draw closer to God, fellowship with Him and thank Him for the birth of His Son. Go into the New Year with this same gratitude and focus on Jesus. Keep Him first in your life all year long. **Proverbs 3:6** says, ***"In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success."***

Cory's Corner

Plan A

When you allow God to use you ... GREAT things happen!

Hello friends ... Yes, I know it has been quite a long time since I've touched base with you all, but it's NOT because I've fallen, slipped or even forgotten about you. It's really just because I've been allowing God to use me. Many of you may not know my entire story but just the writings in *Cory's Corner* here in the  newsletters.

One of the first Corners that I wrote had my testimony of me being saved, and at the same time I told of me walking away from my family as I was headed to D.O.C. in 2007 for 7 years. Year to date ... the very woman I divorced in 2003 ... I just remarried! Yes that's right; I just 'Remarried' the love of my life! The way that God can mend a relationship by the faith of a mustard seed is AWESOME! I not only have my wife back but I also have a great godly teenage daughter that serves and loves the Lord, and is on point every Wednesday at youth group and is constantly praising Jesus. Yes, she is my little princess warrior for God. OUR FAMILY enjoys serving the Lord together.

This was a true blessing to me and my family because the entire time that I was down I chose to honor and serve God through both the good times and the bad times no matter what the cost. I stood on all the promises of God written in the Bible. One of the greatest promises I stood on is found in **Joel 2:25**, "**So I WILL RESTORE TO YOU THE YEARS that the swarming locust has eaten.**" And He has done just that!


Not only has my family been restored but so have my career opportunities. When I left D.O.C. in 2014, I pursued a job that I had learned 'inside' the fence. Well, the Lord gave me that job working in commercial truck tires, just as I had prayed for. Then after I was remarried and 'RESTORED' back with my family, we also found a beautiful home to rent through our church family. So, I could see that I was going to need to step up to the plate and start earning a little more income. Well, Jesus only works when we allow Him to use us in our faith. So, I prayed and just shortly after I was given the opportunity of 'on the job' training as an HVAC tech for a great company. And today I am on my own, in my own truck, doing AC/heating calls. I will say once more, "When you allow God to use you He will pour out a double portion upon you." I now make in one week twice the amount I made in 2 weeks at my other job. On top of that, my manager is a great man of God, who also like me, is an Alongside Ministry graduate. He also allows God to use him as well. He has allowed many brothers that have come 'from the inside' of the fences great career opportunities. He is just like us and has come from the same places.

I've seen so many people that get out and seem to always have a 'Plan B'. But if we truly allow God to use us there is no need for a 'Plan B'. Only a 'Plan A' is required. Here's what my 'Plan A' looks like: "Rely on God's Word and put my faith into works." Simple. You can't say I trust in God when you won't allow Him to use you. Even if it hurts, you have got to let go, and let God.

Well, my family in Christ, I can't express just how it feels each and every day I let God drive the car of my life. He knows where you need to go, He knows the best way to get you there and you can rest assure that He will always be on time. So, the first way that my family and I have allowed God to use us is:

1) We have adopted a little child from Namare Shum in Africa through the mail. Our church, First Christian of Phoenix does mission work there in Africa, and it is such a great honor to listen to all of the thank you notes from the little children as they receive books to read, water to wash up in and yes food to eat.

2) As a family we trust God to use us without wavering in His Word. We rely solely on taking it to the Lord in prayer. THIS IS FAITH, THIS IS LOVE. God said in **Psalm 89:33-34**, "**Nevertheless My loving kindness I will NOT take from him nor will I allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will NOT break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.**" See! When you allow God to use you He will NEVER pull back. So, think about that the next time you tell someone that you trust in the Lord. Or better yet, think about it when you pray that to Jesus. And remember, stay on your knees and in the Word! Why? Because it makes the enemy mad and weak!

Here's another event I want to share with all of you. This month my family and a couple brothers went to visit **Duck** and Michelle at the  home for ... Me to be baptized in their pool. I have been saved for 8 years now and baptism is the outward confession of what has already taken place on the inside of me 8 years ago. I decided that this was where I wanted to be baptized. And now we want to share a few of the photos from that day with all of you as we celebrated!!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ..." **Matthew 28:19** (NIV)

The pictures of my baptism are on page 11.



My Christmas Greeting Card to You All, Short and Tall ... Foot

As you can see by the date on the calendar in this Christmas card below, 'Bad Santa' is running a little late this year. We all could probably attest to the fact that we've believed in many different things and people in our lives all the while 'believing' they were true. Only after beating our heads against the wall for so long, finally, some of us have come to find, those belief systems were in fact the furthest things from the truth. But let me encourage everyone that Jesus IS the Truth, the Life and the Way! Jesus IS the true way to a much better life than many of us had ever thought we'd ever experience.

Most of the world celebrates this season as a time of giving gifts, laughter and family. Well, let me encourage you all today that Jesus IS the Greatest Gift, the free Gift from God to each and everyone who believes in Him. Unlike the 'Bad Santa' that apparently won't get the gifts delivered on time, Jesus is NEVER late in any season of your life, He's always right on time. Jesus is the Gift that keeps on giving! Vaya con Dios!



To Give of Oneself is a Holy Gift

Contributed by V.H. - Author Unknown

This Christmas ...

Mend a quarrel ...

Seek out a forgotten friend ...

Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust ...

Write a letter ...

Give a soft answer ...

Encourage youth ...

Manifest your loyalty in word and deed ...

Keep a promise ...

Forgo a grudge ...

Forgive an enemy ...

Apologize ...

Try to understand ...

Examine your demands on others ...

Think first of someone else ...

Be kind ...

Be gentle ...

Laugh a little more ...

Express your gratitude ...

Welcome a stranger ...

Gladden the heart of a child ...

Speak your love and then speak it again ...

Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.

Help us be better stewards by sending your change of address when you move to help reduce unnecessary waste and expense

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