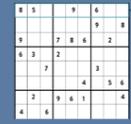


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Teresa's Story: Sober and Celebrating

by Emily Andrews

Teresa Stanfield remembers staring at her face in the mirror inside the Oklahoma County Jail, 41 years old and exhausted. Where did my life go? she asked herself. For 20 years, she'd been running from her troubles, from the law, and from her full potential.

Teresa's childhood memories were far from picture-perfect. As a little girl, she experienced abuse from a neighbor. She also struggled to deal with her parents' divorce. When she took her first sip of alcohol at age 12, she liked how drinking helped her forget the pain and shame.

As a teen, Teresa disliked authority. She became more and more rebellious. "If somebody told me to do something, I wanted to do the exact opposite," she says.

She continued experimenting with drugs and alcohol, and by age 17, she was deep in addiction. But nothing she tried, from cocaine to heroin, filled her



Photo by Prison Fellowship

Teresa had a rocky past of addiction, rebellion, jails, and treatment centers. She even gave birth behind bars. But then one support group changed everything.

emptiness for very long. Soon she had three DUIs and faced her first drug

possession charge. For two decades, her life was a blur of jails, treatment

centers, and prison. When Teresa reached rock bottom, she found herself giving birth

to her baby girl in the county jail and handing the baby over to her mother's care. It was the hardest thing Teresa had ever done. She didn't want to give up hope, but for so long, she could not see a way out of her addiction. She eventually landed in the Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC).

Teresa grew up going to church, but she always felt distant from God. Most of her prayers up to that point were attempts to bargain with God. But one day at EWCC, she finally tried an honest prayer: *God, I feel like You're the only One who can heal me.*

Walking in freedom

Soon after that prayer, Teresa entered the prison chapel for her first church service in years. It felt like coming home. There, she joined a biblically based, 12-step recovery program called Celebrate Recovery (CR) Inside. The group began each meeting with praise and worship music, and with every song, Teresa felt her guilt and

Continued on page 2

Find Your Tribe Behind Bars

by Stacia Ray

Muddling through life alone isn't appealing. We want a circle of friends who will enrich our lives and stand by our side.

That's true even when—or maybe especially when—you're stuck behind bars, having to deal with the same problems as the outside world and the problems unique to prison life, all while living in a fishbowl. When prison

life gets stressful, you need companions to give you encouragement. When you have a conflict with your cellmate or a corrections officer, you need friends to help calm you down. This longing to belong is why some people join a gang. But while a gang might offer a sense of protection, it also offers trouble and strings attached. You don't need a gang—you need a handful of trustworthy and supportive people to help get you through life in a healthy way. You need a tribe. Here are three ways to find

and strengthen your tribe while serving your time.

1. Seek out positive influencers.

Has your blood ever started pumping hard when you saw someone fighting, or have you ever teared up when you saw someone crying? Studies show that emotions are contagious. Hanging out with happier people makes you feel happier, less stressed, and more energized.

Think of your habits and traits (short-tempered, lazy, critical, etc.) that you could stand to improve, and then find people who have the traits you'd like to have. Observe how they act/react. Mirror their behaviors. And the more positive people you hang around, the more their



Photo by LoveTheWind/GettyImages

positivity will rub off on you. One in-depth study from 1948 to 2008 revealed that having a close contact in your social circle who is happy increases your own chance of happiness by 15%. And a secondary social contact (friend-of-a-friend)

who is happy increases your chance of happiness by 10%. Even a friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend, someone who doesn't even know you well, can increase your likelihood of happiness by 6%.

Continued on page 2

Letters to the Editor



Marlie, Florida

I am an inmate. I was shown a Bible from a friend that you had sent her. I would like to have a large print Bible like the one she has. I am 62 years old and would love to have one. I have to wear reading glasses. Even when I wear them, I have issues reading the Word. I would love to have one of your Bibles. Thank you so much. I love the Lord and want to walk closer with Him through His Word.

Tammy, Florida

I believe in God. I have a friend with the [Inside Journal NLT Life Recovery Bible], and he let me use it. I found that it is very essential to

life, and it can help me in my everyday living. I am asking if you can send me my own copy of this Bible.

Dear Marlie and Tammy:

To order the Inside Journal NLT Life Recovery Bible, please see our ad on p.3. God bless you both on your walk with the Lord!

Rosalind, Connecticut

Thank you for the inspiring words that come from your newsletter. The topics are ones that I myself can relate to.

Dear Rosalind:

So glad you're finding inspiration through Inside Journal! Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, and we will keep you in prayer. ■

Find Your Tribe

Continued from page 1

2. Find a tribe with balance.

Healthy tribes offer a safe place to just be yourself—and to be called out when you need a reality check. Surround yourself with people who tell you what you need to hear, not just what you want to hear. People who simply agree with everything you say aren't going to challenge you.

But on the flipside, you don't want a tribe that only brings conflict. If you and a friend/spouse feel tension, try this exercise together: Make a list of the strengths and weaknesses in your relationship. Write down more positive than negative

aspects (at least a 2-to-1 ratio) and to not critique anything that's unchangeable ("I wish you had a different laugh") or vague ("I wish you weren't annoying"). To get you started, finish the statements "I appreciate ___" and "I get frustrated by ___." Then take turns discussing your list using the "sandwich" feedback method: list one positive, then one negative, and then end with another positive.

3. Consult a trustworthy mentor.

To strengthen your friendships, find a fellow prisoner or outside volunteer who has a strong, healthy social circle. To strengthen your marriage or relationship

with your significant other, find a prisoner or volunteer who is in a long, healthy marriage.

Ask these mentors what they know now that they wish they'd known when they were younger or earlier on in their friendships/marriages. Turn to them for advice or support whenever you're feeling lost or frustrated in your own relationships.

Surround yourself with positive and supportive people. Find the friends who will have your back while still bringing out the best in you—friends who care enough about you to give you what you need, even when it might not be what you want. That's a sign of a healthy tribe. ■

FIND YOUR TRIBE IN PARENTING

An African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." That's especially true when you're parenting behind bars. Here are three ways to find your parenting village while incarcerated:

1. Tap another adult to be your child's mentor.

Ask your child's caregiver if there's a trustworthy coach or other adult who can spend time with your child. Also, find a Christian community member, pastor, or relative who can serve as a spiritual mentor—someone to teach your children to turn to God whenever they're afraid or missing you. Even if the child's caregiver is doing a great job, the more positive influences, the better.

2. Do "shared activities" together.

If your kids are young, find activities you can both do, even while apart, like each coloring the same picture. If they're older, ask them to write a list of tough questions about faith, life, friendships, and then discuss the answers together, in person (ideally) or through video visits, phone calls, or the mail. The Angel Tree program is also a great way to bond. (See p.3.)

3. Encourage your child to find their best tribe.

Remind your kids to hang out with other kids who are making good choices. Positive influences—including books, movies, and social media sites—matter too. Your example matters most of all, so stay out of trouble yourself and dive into prison classes and programs.

Sober and Celebrating

Continued from page 1

shame begin to fade away.

"Before, I had allowed the enemy to tell me that I wasn't good enough, or that I wasn't worthy," Teresa explains. "[Then] I started filling my heart and my mind with tools to stay sober and with God's Word. My life truly started to transform."

In CR, Teresa found a supportive, Christ-centered community. She met other incarcerated women who faced similar struggles and addictions. With the help of those women and caring volunteers, Teresa took steps toward healing.

"It is so important to have people walk with you when you're going through that [recovery] journey," says Teresa. In order to heal, she says she needed to learn to finally trust people, to learn more about herself and what brought her to this point, and to fully accept the unconditional love of Jesus.

A life to celebrate

At CR, Teresa discovered a new identity in Jesus, and He freed her from her addiction. At first, it was a challenge to

experience emotions without drugs. "Whether I was excited, or I was mad, or I was sad, I always used [drugs]," she says. "I used every single day of my life. It was really humbling to walk through the different challenges that I've had and remain sober and seeing God's hand in all of it."

On August 29, 2011, Teresa walked away from the prison yard and toward her mother, grandmother, son, and daughter on the other side of the fence. She went to live with her grandmother at first, whom Teresa calls "a beautiful Christian woman ... and such a huge part of my recovery."

Today, Teresa serves as a full-time field director for Oklahoma and West Texas for Prison Fellowship®. In this role, she has helped launch seven Prison Fellowship Academy® sites in Oklahoma and West Texas. One of the Academy sites she is most proud of is Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, the very place where she began her own transformation as a prisoner.

And she's still celebrating recovery—hitting the milestone of 10 years sober this summer.

Sudoku: It Takes a Village, So Find Your Tribe!

T	I	A	L	E	B	R	N	H
2		5			9			4
						3		7
7			8	5	6		1	
4	5		7					
		9				1		
					2		8	5
	2		4	1	8			6
6		8						
1			2			7		8

Use the key to unlock the message below!

■ ■ ■ K ■ ■ ■ D.

9 7 ■ 1 6

W ■ ■ ■ ■

7 5 8 7

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

5 3 3 1 6

■ ■ ■ S

2 4 1

■ O G ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

2 7 2 4 7 8

See p.4 for answer key.

She thanks God for it all. "Every time I sit in the [Academy] classroom," says

Teresa, "I learn something." When you finally let go and let God in, He's just so

amazing and so faithful. I know that He has brought me where I am today." ■

Have You Got “Jailhouse Religion”?

by Johnathan Kana

I first learned about “jailhouse religion” when I came to prison. But as it turns out, I had been living it most of my life.

You see, I was the “good kid” growing up—the kind who came from a solid family, made good grades, and never got in serious trouble. I went to church every Sunday and volunteered in the community. Others looked up to me as a spiritual leader.

But that all changed when the story of my arrest made the front page of my hometown newspaper. People who knew me as a child were shocked. No one saw it coming.

I did, though. For many years, my life had been careening out of control, and I had skillfully hidden my struggles behind a mask of religious activity and personal accomplishment. Outwardly, I seemed like a “good Christian” who had it all together. But inwardly, I was a time bomb ready to go off at any minute.

I was a spiritual fraud.

Spiritual criminals

When I told my story to my unit chaplain, he just smiled. “It sounds like you were practicing jailhouse religion long before you got locked up,” he said.

In prison, people use the

phrase “jailhouse religion” to describe individuals who seem religious on the outside but haven’t changed much on the inside. They go to chapel, own a Bible, and pray over meals. But outside of church, they cuss freely, badmouth people, break the rules, and get into petty fights right alongside their peers.

I knew guys like this. They could quote Scripture readily and offered long, wordy prayers in our evening prayer circle. But they couldn’t seem to stay out of trouble with the officers on our unit. A few proudly went by names like “Preacher” and “Reverend.” But they spent more time boasting about war stories from the streets than they did reading their Bibles.

Such people are what Prison Fellowship senior vice-president Sam Dye calls “spiritual criminals.” They say they’ve changed and are working on getting right with God, but what they’re really doing is wearing their religious habits like a spiritual jacket. “You can take it on and take it off at will, depending on who’s around,” Dye says. “It’s really not a part of you.”

It angered me to see people trying to get the benefits of being religious without changing their lives to honor God. But then I knew I was just as guilty as them. Like my chaplain said, I had been

a “spiritual criminal” most of my life, too.

Getting real

In the Bible, Jesus has some pretty harsh words for religious pretenders. “Hypocrites!” he calls them. “You are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones” (Matthew 23:27).

In Jesus’ day, a “hypocrite” was a stage actor—someone hired to play a fictional role. Here, Jesus describes how certain religious leaders appear good but are lifeless in spirit. Like stage actors, they simply put on a good show for others’ applause.

People who practice “jailhouse religion” have learned how to play a fictional role, too. They act one way, but deep down, they’re someone else. They may be admired by others, but God isn’t impressed. “People judge by outward appearance,” the Bible says, “but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Sincere believers aren’t known by their religious behaviors. They’re known by the way they give genuine, selfless love to others. They’re constantly growing in patience, kindness, and self-control—what the Bible calls “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22–23). They make mistakes, of course; we all do! But over time, real

ARE YOU TOO COOL?

To really experience God’s plan for you, you need to fully commit. Get fired up! Not sure where to begin? Start with this prayer:

“God, I don’t want lukewarm ‘jailhouse religion.’ I want the real deal. Please help me to know You more deeply and genuinely. Amen.”

To light your fire even more, sign up for a free correspondence Bible study through one of our trusted partner organizations. Just write to “Fired Up,” c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

Another way to get deeper? Dig in to the Word!

Need a Bible?

To get a FREE *Inside Journal NLT Life Recovery Bible*, write to: Tyndale House Publishers, Attn: Inside Journal Bible, 351 Executive Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188. Please include your name and prison ID number, your facility name, your facility address, and whether you want English or Spanish. Limit one Bible per person.



believers look more and more like Jesus—both in public and in private.

The Bible says, “When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags” to God (Isaiah 64:6). That’s why God sent His Son Jesus to live the perfect life we never could—and to die the criminal’s death we deserved. And when God raised Jesus from the dead, it proved He had dealt once and for all with our spiritual crimes. Now, if

we’re willing to surrender our lives to Jesus, God’s Spirit takes up residence in our hearts, changing us from the inside out.

I’m grateful God pursued me into prison. For me, it was proof that no one—even a spiritual fraud—is a lost cause. If we’re willing to drop the religious act and pursue God with all our heart, it’s never too late to turn “jailhouse religion” into an authentic, lifetime commitment. ■

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE YOUR CHILDREN A PRICELESS GIFT:

A PRESENT AND A PERSONALIZED MESSAGE FROM YOU, THEIR PARENT WHO LOVES THEM!

This Christmas, your child can wake up to a gift from you through Angel Tree®, a program of Prison Fellowship®.

The gift is purchased by an outside volunteer on your behalf and given with a gift tag containing your personalized message ... all at no cost to you!

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. You must be the parent, stepparent, or mother/father figure.
2. There must not be a court order restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
3. Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
4. Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
5. The form must be filled out completely and legibly and then signed.

ASK YOUR CHAPLAIN OR PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR AN APPLICATION TODAY!

Forms must be postmarked by Sept. 8.

Contact your child(ren)’s caregiver to gather the most current information for your application.

IMPORTANT: If your information is incomplete or inaccurate, if local volunteers are unable to locate your child(ren)’s caregiver, or if the caregiver refuses to participate, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your child(ren).



Got Questions About Angel Tree? We've Got Answers.

Inside Journal spoke with Karen Beauford, a project manager for Angel Tree, a Prison Fellowship program that works to strengthen relationships between incarcerated parents and their kids. Below are some frequently asked questions about Angel Tree, including how you and your child(ren) can participate.



Photo by Choreograph/Getty Images

Inside Journal: What is Angel Tree, and how did it start?

Karen Beauford: Back in 1972, a woman named Mary Kay Beard was sentenced to a 21-year prison sentence, which was later reduced to six. While in prison, Mary Kay read the Bible, and eventually she felt God guiding her to serve Him in a unique way. In the days leading up to Christmas, she would watch the other incarcerated moms send the little they had—soaps, shampoos—to their children as gifts. These makeshift gifts brought so much joy to the children, simply because they had come from their mothers.

Upon her release, Mary Kay joined Prison Fellowship's staff. When asked to come up with some kind of Christmas program, she remembered those incarcerated mothers, and Angel Tree was born. In the 30-plus years since

the program started, it has continued to grow, with around 300,000 children served at Christmastime each year.

IJ: So how does Angel Tree Christmas work?

KB: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons. Prisoners then fill out an application, which the chaplain collects and mails in. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers then call each child's caregiver to coordinate the details. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers buy and wrap the gift, which is then delivered to the child at home or at an Angel Tree Christmas party.

IJ: How does this program strengthen the bond between a parent and child?

KB: On the application forms, prisoners can offer

suggestions on specific toys or gift ideas for their kids. Prisoners also get to write their own personal message to each child. It's a great way to connect parents and children who are physically separated. Kids get to know that their mom might not be home at Christmas, but she's still thinking of them and sending her love.

IJ: How much does the program cost the prisoners?

KB: Nothing! It's completely free to participating prisoners.

IJ: Sometimes people fill out applications, but a gift is not delivered. What are some of the reasons this happens?

KB: The program has some important limitations: You must be the parent, stepparent, or mother/father figure. Your child must be 18 or younger and live in the United States. There must not be a court order

restricting your contact with your kids or their caregiver. And you must fill out the form completely! If the form is incorrect or incomplete, your children may not be eligible. Finally, if the caregiver is not reachable or refuses to participate, we may not be able to deliver the gifts to the children.

IJ: Does the Angel Tree program only happen at Christmastime?

KB: There are also Angel Tree programs that take place throughout the year: Angel Tree Camping® and Angel Tree Sports Clinic™.

IJ: What is Angel Tree Camping?

KB: Angel Tree Camping began in 2002 as an extension of the Angel Tree Christmas program. It started with a generous donation that fully funded camps to sponsor Angel Tree children.

While Prison Fellowship does not directly operate any camp facilities, we rely on partnerships with Christian camps to sponsor children of prisoners through scholarships, and we connect our ministry partners with potential campers and the churches that serve them at Christmas. Kids can go to a sleepaway camp or day camp and have the experience of a lifetime in the great outdoors.

IJ: What is an Angel Tree Sports Clinic?

KB: In 2005, Prison

Fellowship hosted the first Angel Tree football clinic at Stanford University. In 2014, Prison Fellowship began a partnership with the NFL Alumni Association. The Sports Clinic program expanded across the country and extended into such sports as basketball, soccer, and ice skating. Since then, Angel Tree Sports Clinic has held events for thousands of children of prisoners.

IJ: Can an Angel Tree Christmas child participate in Angel Tree Camping or Angel Tree Sports Clinic?

KB: Yes! Angel Tree Camping and Angel Tree Sports Clinic currently have limited space, but they are growing and serving as many children as possible. To find out if there is a summer camp near your child, you or your child's caregiver can call 800.55.ANGEL (26435) to connect with an Angel Tree Camping specialist in your region. To find out if there is a Sports Clinic in your child's area, contact Prison Fellowship's call center at 800.206.9764.

IJ: Where can readers get an Angel Tree Christmas form?

KB: Ask your facility chaplain for a Prison Fellowship Angel Tree form between May and August. If your facility does not yet participate in Angel Tree and would like to, your chaplain can contact 800.55.ANGEL (26435) to learn more. Forms must be postmarked by September 8, 2020. ■

News + Notes

COVID-19's Reminder of Resilience

COVID-19 has affected everything from our nation's economy to the justice system. This virus is like nothing we've ever seen before, and people's lives are forever changed.

COVID-19 has impacted our justice system, our prison system, and even Prison Fellowship's Second Chance® Month prayer walks, which were changed from physical to virtual in response to the virus. COVID-19 has also shown how incredibly strong prisoners are. When faced with challenges and lockdowns, prisoners handled it with grace, even inspiring the outside society, who turned to those on the inside for ideas on how to handle being isolated from family.

On April 1, the White House issued a proclamation, signed by the president, declaring April 2020 as Second Chance Month for the third year in a row.

More than 380 partners joined Prison Fellowship in advocating for second chances, and several states declared their support for Second Chance Month.

In April, social media campaigns, prayer groups, Twitter chats, and other activities centered around Second Chance Month took place around the nation. Prayer leaders in Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Lincoln, Oklahoma City, Fresno, and San Bernardino joined forces for a Road to Second Chances Virtual Prayer Meeting, where community members from all these cities came together to cover our nation with prayer.

Second Chance Month reminds us that we are more than our past mistakes. We are all made in God's image, and each of us has a future. COVID-19 reminds us that we are all in this world together, and God can reveal silver linings in even the biggest storms.

Oregon Prisoners Make a Difference for Kids

For more than 10 years, prisoners at the Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI), a medium-security, 900-person facility in Salem, Oregon, have held an annual fundraiser. Last summer they raised money for Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, which helps ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive a special Christmas gift and personalized note from their parent (see p.3).

On August 16, 2019,

a group of prisoners at OSCI hosted a barbecue, a walkathon, and fundraising booths. Wonderful smells filled the air at OSCI's large yard. The barbecue featured cheeseburgers, barbecue chicken, hot dogs, and more. Hundreds of people participated in the walkathon, each earning one penny per lap. After three and a half hours and hundreds of laps, walkers had earned hundreds of dollars, including donations from prisoner clubs. The event raised more than \$4,000—a new record!

"When you do something to help others, it's giving back to the community, and it's a really, really positive thing," said George Escalante, recreation specialist at OSCI. "It's a great message, a great cause. The result is priceless at all levels. It's helping [prisoners] realize, 'I can do something good.'" ■

SUDOKU: Answer Key

T	I	A	L	E	B	R	N	H
2	1	5	3	7	9	8	6	4
9	8	6	1	2	4	3	5	7
7	3	4	8	5	6	2	1	9
4	5	2	7	8	1	6	9	3
8	6	9	5	4	3	1	7	2
3	7	1	6	9	2	4	8	5
5	2	7	4	1	8	9	3	6
6	4	8	9	3	7	5	2	1
1	9	3	2	6	5	7	4	8

Use the key to unlock the message below!

B E K I N D .

9 7 1 6

W E A R E

7 5 8 7

A L L I N

5 3 3 1 6

T H I S

2 4 1

T O G E T H E R .

2 7 2 4 7 8



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