Trading the American Dream for a Better Reality

by Faith White

Jeremy Hart’s early adult life was centered on one goal: financial success. Jeremy would do anything if it meant more money for him and his family. For years, Jeremy worked as a financial advisor in Colorado, but that level of success wasn’t cutting it. Jeremy’s ambition led him to explore more work opportunities illegally. Then in 2008, as the economy was crashing, so were Jeremy’s illegal business ventures.

In 2010, Jeremy was indicted on 31 counts of fraud and sentenced to nine years in the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC). He felt so overwhelmed by the shame he had caused his family that he attempted to overdose on prescription pills mixed with alcohol.

Second chances
But during that overdose attempt, Jeremy was awakened by an unexpected phone call from a former client. “He started talking to me about what love looks like, what hope looks like, and what forgiveness looks like,” Jeremy says. That fateful phone call helped him choose to keep living.

While in prison, Jeremy was still riddled with anxiety, guilt, and depression, and he was even put on suicide watch. But then a day came that he will never forget: Pastors from a local church came to pray for the prisoners at Jeremy’s facility. “The moment they just touched me to start praying, it all just finally came out—the emotion, the weight, I think, was starting to lift,” says Jeremy. “I knew that my heart was starting to realize what it meant to find the hope in Christ.” A few days later, Jeremy accepted Christ as his Savior and never looked back.

As Jeremy began to live out his newfound faith, men on the prison yard noticed his joy and peace. He started talking about God’s love with other prisoners. However, Jeremy was a father when he went to prison, and the separation from his children continued to weigh heavily on Jeremy. “To this day, that [separation] is still something that is kind of hard to grasp,” Jeremy says.

During his second year in prison, Jeremy saw the flyer for Prison Fellowship Angel Tree®. This free program delivers a personal gift to children whose parents are incarcerated.

Jeremy Hart was ready to end it all. Then an unexpected guest came to prison and changed everything.

6 HABITS of a Lifetime Learner

by Cherise Bopape

All is often considered back-to-school time. Well, going back to school doesn’t just need to be reserved for kids. You too can be a student! Studies show that “lifetime learners” (people who continue to take classes or learn new things throughout their lives) have better mental and physical health. Reading can improve sleep and reduce stress, learning can contribute to longer lifespan, and higher education leads to better intellectual understanding in your old age. An added bonus: If you have kids, they might feel inspired by your desire to educate yourself this fall!

Here are six healthy habits of lifetime learners:

1. Find and focus on your end goal.
   Figure out what you want to learn and why. When you’re tempted to doze off, skip a day, or quit, remember your reason for learning. Walter Blissit regretted not being able to financially support his wife and daughter during the eight years he spent behind bars. But he was determined to provide for them. He decided to earn his HVAC and personal trainer certifications while incarcerated. By keeping the end goal in mind, he was able to stay focused even on hard days. Walter was released and is now an HVAC technician who provides for his family.

2. Determine your learning style.
   You learn by what you see, hear, read, write, and do. Determine what works best for you. Are you a visual learner or an audio learner? Do you prefer studying in a group, listening to lectures, or doing your own research? Would you remember key points from a role-playing exercise but have trouble understanding your notes? Do charts and pictures help you remember what you’ve been taught? Everyone’s learning style is a little different. Embrace yours.

3. Get a mentor—and be open to changing.
   Mentors guide and strengthen you—that is, if you let them. Find someone who does the kind of work you want to do. They can give you advice and help you navigate the world of work.

Continued on page 2
Letters to the Editor

Harrison in Arizona
I read your Spring 2021 edition and it has awesome testimonies I love to hear. It is inspiring especially that we are locked down and quarantined. I am happy another man passed your newsletter to me. Thank you for your encouraging stories.

Dear Harrison:
We are happy someone passed it to you, too—the encouraging stories in Inside Journal are meant to be shared. Please feel free to pass this edition to someone else when you’re done reading it. You never know when just the right person will connect with just the right story!

Jimmy in Oregon
I’m studying to be a Christian drug treatment counselor. I believe the Life Recovery Bible would really help me and guide me in understanding and also be very useful in planning NA meetings.

Dear Jimmy:
You’re on a great career path! And the Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible does indeed contain a lot of helpful recovery tools. Also, we are thrilled to report that now we offer a Life Recovery Bible Workbook, too! The Workbook and the Bible are both available to you for free (see page 7 for more information).

Alfonso in New York
I was in my cell and read a story from Inside Journal, and the story of Darryl Brooks was real. I’m proud of him, and it just tells me if I stay focused, I can do the same thing, in the name of God. See I’m an addict and I have 7 months clean. I love my family and I just had a relapse due to COVID-19 and other feelings that I’m dealing with here [in jail]. I really want that deep change Mr. Brooks had. Please help me.

Dear Alfonso:
Keep up the good work in staying focused on your sobriety. We will pray for you on your journey to a life free from addiction. Try surrounding yourself with others at your facility who are also seeking change, look for programs the prison offers, and if you don’t yet have an Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible, see page 7 for instructions on how to receive one. Remember, Mr. Brook’s transformation started when he was right where you are. Keep it up. You can do this.

Joey in Georgia
Currently I’m writing for the second step to the Crossroads Correspondence Course. These little mail classes can be a real eye-opener if you put in the effort.

Dear Joey:
We’re glad to hear this—continuing your education and keeping your brain stimulated is so important. Read more about ways to continue your education on page 1. Editor’s Note: For more information on how to obtain a free correspondence course from one of our partner organizations, please see the sidebar on page 3.

Sincerely,
The Editorial Staff

Better Reality
Continued from page 1
message, the Gospel, and a Christmas gift to children in the name of their incarcerated parent. Jeremy loved the idea of connecting with his kids.

Full circle
Jeremy was released on parole in the summer of 2015. He went to Arizona after his release, where he plugged in to a small group at a large church called Cornerstone. Jeremy was eager to learn everything he could about God and how he could personally contribute to God’s kingdom.

Jeremy also felt inspired to pursue ministry, so he enrolled in seminary at Grand Canyon University. He quickly became a pastoral intern at Cornerstone, where he learned how to counsel and minister to others on their journey through life as a Christian. When Jeremy received his Arizona DOC volunteer badge, he joyfully returned to prison to talk about Jesus. “Everybody used to always say, ‘Man, you want to get back in as soon as you can? You’re crazy.’ I’m like, ‘I can’t get back in fast enough,’” says Jeremy. He felt it was God’s plan for him to personally share the Gospel of Jesus with his fellow men back in prison. Jeremy graduated from seminary in May 2020. He is now an ordained chaplain. He works with Angel Tree activities to help other prisoners’ families experience the same joy and hope the program gave his children. “Angel Tree allowed me to realize how to offer love in a real way to my own kids,” says Jeremy. “And serving in Angel Tree allows me to unite [other] kids back to the parent. It is full circle.” Jeremy has also come full circle by preaching the Good News of Jesus’ love to prisoners. To Jeremy, it is a priceless gift to inspire and counsel others in the same difficult position he once faced.

Today, when he looks back over his life, Jeremy sees God’s faithfulness. As he holds his old prisoner ID in one hand and his DOC volunteer badge in the other, he is amazed. He explains that if he could sum up his life in one word, it would be “grace.”

6 Habits of a Lifetime Learner
Continued from page 1
who exhibits the qualities you want to see in yourself. Look around. Some of your fellow prisoners may be good potential mentors.

A strong mentor is often someone who is good at:
- Avoiding hypocrisy.
- Staying out of trouble.
- Having a job.
- Going to classes.
- Doing things to better themselves and being good examples.
- Being productive and not lounging on their bunks all day.

4. Figure out the subjects you want to learn.
There’s always something to learn, so keep a list of topics or activities that interest you. Would you like to get your GED? Do you want to learn more about the law and your parole rights? Have you always wanted to learn to play an instrument? Find out what classes are available or what books are in your library. Some facilities have a choir, some have scriptwriting classes, and some teach trades, such as welding.

5. Commit to a timeline and a routine.
If you’ll be taking a class with a start and end date, tell yourself you won’t skip any classes. If you’ll be learning on your own through library books, commit to a certain number of hours per week or a certain number of months. Start your day with something inspiring—a devotional, a prayer, a quote. And end your day with something relaxing, like gentle stretches or reading. Be intentional about setting up a well-ordered life—one that promotes learning instead of chaos.

6. Find creative ways to learn.
Not all learning happens in a classroom or a book. Look for opportunities to grow as you perform your daily activities. Perhaps you’ll learn the meaning of a trendy word by listening to a new song. Maybe you’ll read the nutrition label on a commissary snack to learn how much fat it contains. Whatever you do, dig deeper, ask questions, pay attention to your surroundings, and read, because learning is always "in season."
Don’t Worry, Be Present
by M.M. White

Back in the late ’80s, a song hit the pop charts. Its message was simple: “Don’t worry. Be happy.” The artist sang, “In every life we have some trouble. But when you worry, you make it double. Don’t worry, be happy. Don’t worry, be happy.”

We all know life can have its happy moments. And plenty of them. We also know life doesn’t always serve up cheerful melodies. Life can be hard. Life has its trouble. And plenty of them. We have its happy moments. We also know life doesn’t control that, either. Children are growing up. Loved ones are passing away. Friends are getting married. There are all kinds of life events like these and more going on out there while you’re living within these walls (not out there). Birthdays, graduations, weddings, and funerals don’t wait until you can be there. And that can make you feel cut off from the future.

How can you possibly not worry about the past? How can you not worry about the future? How can you instead just be content in the present?

“A new life has begun”

The Bible talks a lot about this. Several verses mention the idea of the past being behind you (“the old life is gone, a new life has begun” — 2 Corinthians 5:17), and several more talk about not worrying about the future. Matthew 6:34 says, “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” By the way, that doesn’t mean tomorrow is sure to have worries, or that those worries will have a hold on you. It just means today is all you need to focus on right now. Be present. Be content.

Paul writes in Philippians 4:11–12 that contentment is about where your heart is. “I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation.” Paul had found a life of peace and joy once, by faith, he had said yes to Jesus Christ as his Lord. When he had said yes to letting Jesus into his heart, Paul began to experience the unconditional love, comfort, and care of Christ, all of which gave Paul strength to live through difficult times. He found—on the inside—a security in Jesus Christ that kept him from worrying.

You might say, that’s great, but I’m not like Paul. You might be surprised! If you get a chance, try to read more about Paul in the New Testament book of Acts. There you’ll see Paul in his days before meeting Jesus. He went by “Saul” back then, and he was an enemy of believers in Christ. He was known to hunt them down and abuse them. He was even an accessory to murder. If Jesus can change him, Jesus can change any of us.

Here’s something else you may not have known: Paul actually wrote about being content from prison! Being in chains and on lock down didn’t keep Paul from finding a new way to experience life. Instead of worrying, he learned to trust God’s love, which he received in his heart through his faith in Jesus Christ. You too can have in Jesus what Paul found: the One who can give you happiness and peace on the inside to deal with what comes on the outside.

Are you upset by the past? Worried about the future?

There are too many things in life that we have no control over—most things, in fact. And if we let things get to us, worry can take its toll. Thankfully, we can cast our cares on God. In the Bible, 1 Peter 5:7 says: “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” And Isaiah 41:10 says: “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

The Bible doesn’t say to never plan ahead or to never learn from your past. It’s human nature to want to control the future or dwell on the past. Worry, especially over things that are truly troubling, is a common emotion. But if you accept Jesus in your heart as your Savior and are ready to fully surrender your life—your worries, your fears, your desire to control—over to Him, He can replace your fear with His peace. Maybe not overnight, but in time.

Not sure where to begin? Start with this simple prayer:

“God, I want to live in the moment and not worry about things outside of my control. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Please replace my fear with Your peace. Amen.”

Want to learn more about Jesus or have other comments? Write to us at “Don’t Worry,” c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Need a free Bible or Workbook? See our ad on page 7.

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FALL BACK QUIZ:

Fall is the season when daylight saving time ends and most states set their clocks back one hour (“fall back”). Here’s a quiz on topics relating to fall. See how well you know your stuff. Answers on page 4.

1. Which two states don’t observe daylight saving time?
2. “Spring ahead, fall back” is a mnemonic (pronounced “nuhmahn-ik”) memory device used to remind people whether to set their clocks ahead an hour (in the spring) or back an hour (in the fall). Can you think of another memory device like this?
3. University of Chicago researchers have found that people born in the fall have the highest chance of what? A. Having freckles; B. Being night owls; C. Living to 100 years old; D. Being tall.
4. How many pumpkins are used in the average container of pumpkin pie spice?
5. Fall sees more what than any other season? A. New relationships; B. Weddings; C. Babies born; D. Divorces.
This past year has been hard for everyone, and in the isolation of a pandemic, it’s easy to feel forgotten. But even in the midst of COVID-19, which caused many facilities to shut doors to volunteers and programs, God was still making a way to bring encouragement and hope inside. That’s how Prison Fellowship’s Floodlight® was born.

Floodlight is a free video service created especially for men and women in prison and currently used in virtually every state. It provides videos through partnerships with top content providers and through original productions created by Prison Fellowship.

Every month, Floodlight viewers can see inspirational stories from returning citizens, hear words of encouragement from believers on the outside, enjoy music and drama, learn and practice leadership skills with the Global Leadership Summit faculty, or come together for a virtual Hope Event™. Viewers can also find thoughtful and practical Bible studies. Programs are available in Spanish and English.

Here is a program guide of this fall’s lineup:

**SEPTEMBER**

**A New Day 1**
Original Documentary • Prison Fellowship
Walk through the steps, hurdles, and successes of Prison Fellowship Academy® graduates upon their release.

**I’m Not OK, but Jesus Is with Louie Giglio**
Bible Teaching • Passion City Church, Louie Giglio
Be encouraged to hang on in the face of real depression (six-part series).

**Heart Over Head with Craig Groeschel**
Leadership • Global Leadership Summit
Explore the power of emotions in leadership and navigate those emotions of the heart.

**It’s Not Supposed to Be This Way**
Recovery • Proverbs 31 Ministries
Learn more about addiction recovery with Proverbs 31 Ministries founder Lisa TerKeurst (four-part series).

**OCTOBER**

**Serenity Prayer**
Bible Teaching • The Skit Guys
Have a blast with Tommy Woodard and Eddie James, better known as “The Skit Guys." Long-time best friends, these two jokesters teach God’s Word using comedy, drama, and talking action figures.

**The Bible for Grownups with Andy Stanley**
Bible Teaching • North Point Ministries
Watch Andy Stanley give a fresh approach to the Bible (four-part series).

**From Giving Up to Giving Her All**
Personal Story • Prison Fellowship
Hear Angela share her powerful second-chance story, finding her way through addiction and recovery.

**The Bible for Grownups with Andy Stanley**
Bible Teaching • North Point Ministries
Watch Andy Stanley give a fresh approach to the Bible (four-part series).

*Although this guide contains actual content playing in Floodlight-equipped facilities, it is meant to serve as an example of the types of programming available. Content may vary and is subject to change.

To learn how your facility can access this free Floodlight platform, ask your chaplain or prison program manager to email floodlight@pfm.org for more information.

**QUIZ ANSWERS**
from page 3

1. Arizona and Hawaii. The United States officially adopted daylight saving time as part of the Uniform Time Act of 1966. Before that, states could come up with their own times. Iowa once had 23 different start/end dates! The 1966 law brought order to the country’s chaotic clocks, but it didn’t require all states to comply. Arizona and Hawaii eventually opted out.

2. There are so many! Here are some good ones: Never Eat Shredded Wheat for the directions, clockwise from top (North, East, South, West); My Very Energetic Mother Just Served Us Nachos for the planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune—though in this memory sentence, “Nachos” used to be “Nine Pizzas” back when Pluto was a planet); i before e except after c, and when sounding like “a” as in neighbor and weigh.

3. C. Studies show that people born in September, October, or November are much more likely to live to 100 than people born in other months. Studies also show that although October babies have the highest risk of disease (with May babies having the lowest), October-born people are less likely to commit suicide or suffer from depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. One small study even found that those born in October and November were better athletes.

4. Zero. It is typically made from 3 tablespoons ground cinnamon, 2 teaspoons ground ginger, 2 teaspoons ground nutmeg, 1 ½ teaspoons ground allspice and 1 ½ teaspoons ground cloves. But no pumpkins.

5. A. More people go from “single” to “in a relationship” or “engaged” in the fall than any other season. Some scientists think this is because both men and women experience a higher level of testosterone in the fall.
How are you passing your time? After spending 15 years in the prison system, I can tell you that many incarcerated men and women waste their days doing nothing worthwhile. Some will say this is because there is simply nothing worthwhile to do. That’s a bunch of garbage!

Take a brief moment to examine yourself. What are you doing with your time? Are you making the necessary changes to get out and stay out? Or even if you don’t have a release date set, are you using your time to become a person of purpose right where you are?

Let me ask a question to those of you who are sick of doing time: If you were to die today, what would you most regret? Consider all the gravestones you have ever seen. What are some of the most common inscriptions? “Here lies so-and-so: faithful father, brother, and son.” But do you ever see: “Here lies so-and-so: spades guy,” or “Here lies so-and-so, who wished he could have watched more TV or ironed better creases or gotten one more chicken sandwich from the chow hall”?

When I was incarcerated, I had a lot of time to think about the choices I made. I had rejected God’s authority over my life and decided to live my own way. Often, it seemed that overcoming the obstacles and challenges set before me would be impossible. But then I examined my life and committed it to the Lord. Every day, I had to choose whether to wallow in my self-pity or to begin the difficult process of preparing for my freedom. You all have the same choice. Which will you choose?

It was a cold and _____ November day. When I woke up, I heard _____ yell, “______!” That’s when I realized it was Thanksgiving! That meant the cafeteria was going to be serving _____ and glasses of ___. But it also meant _____ would be in a _____ mood!

Still, this Thanksgiving felt different. The yard was covered in _____ snow, and the hallways were filled with ____. The warden was even ____. I was so _____! When it finally came time to eat, the chow hall ended up serving plates of _____ and glasses of ____. It was the _____-est Thanksgiving ever!

After his release from prison, Richard Swiger began to work for Prison Fellowship, where he now serves as the Ohio field director.
Charles “Chuck” Colson (1931–2012) was a Republican political operative who boasted that he would “walk over my own grandmother” to ensure the reelection of President Richard M. Nixon. When Nixon got into hot water (and was eventually impeached) for a scandal referred to as Watergate, Chuck knew he would be in deep trouble for taking part in the scandal. When the threat of prosecution haunted him and his family, a close friend gave Chuck a copy of Mere Christianity, a book by popular British author C.S. Lewis that explores and defends the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The book sparked a series of conversations and encounters that led to Chuck’s conversion. Shortly after becoming a Christian, Chuck pled guilty to obstruction of justice and served seven months in Alabama’s Maxwell Prison. While there, he promised that when he was released, he would never forget the men at Maxwell. “Bull!” fellow prisoner Archie said. “Big shots like you get out and forget little guys like us.” But Chuck stood by his word. In 1976, he founded Prison Fellowship, which is now the nation’s largest Christian nonprofit serving prisoners, former prisoners, and their families, and a leading advocate for criminal justice reform.

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**CHICKEN JALAPENO RANCH BURRITOS**

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 (8-oz.) box of rice (or precooked rice packet)
- 1 can chile lime ramen soup
- 1 (4.5-oz.) chicken breast
- 1 container of jalapeno cream cheese
- 1 pack of tortillas
- 2 (1.5-oz.) servings of ranch dressing
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 lid from a peanut butter jar (for measurements)
- Optional: hot sauce

In microwave-safe bowl, place 1 lid full of rice and 1.5 lids of hot water. Microwave until rice is cooked (go 30 seconds at a time to avoid overcooking). Afterward, in a separate bowl, microwave 1/2 block of ramen (noodles only, no seasoning) in water based on package directions. Drain water and allow noodles and rice to cool. Place cooked rice and noodles in large bowl. Mix in cream cheese, ranch dressing, garlic, and half the chili lime seasoning packet. Gently mix in chicken. Place mixture on tortillas. Add hot sauce (optional). Fold into burritos and serve warm or cold. Makes 4 burritos.

(Both recipes taken from Arizona State Prison Complex’s “Tonto’s Cookbook,” L. Anderson, Managing Editor/Writer)

Not all ingredients will be available at all facilities. Be sure to comply with your facility’s rules and regulations whenever cooking.

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**RECIPE CORNER**

**CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIES**

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 (16-oz.) bag of vanilla wafers
- 1 (10-oz.) packet of cocoa
- 2 (14.4-oz.) boxes of graham crackers
- 1 (18-oz.) jar of peanut butter
- 1 large (16-oz.) glass of tap water
- Optional: Mixed nuts, trail mix, or M&Ms

Break one sleeve of graham crackers (typically nine crackers total) into dime-size pieces and set aside. In plastic baggie or large empty chip bag, crush wafers and 5 sleeves of crackers into a fine dust. Mix in cocoa, peanut butter, and water (adding a little water at a time until gooyey; you may not need all the water); stir (or knead) the mixture. Add dime-size pieces and any optional ingredients, being careful not to grind them up. On plastic surface, roll out mixture to 1/2- to 3/4-inch-thick layer. Allow to set. Cut into 2-inch squares. Makes around 20–30 squares.

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**Did You Know?**

Who is the founder of Prison Fellowship?
A New Leaf with Jesus
by Faith White

Fall is the season when leaves change colors and nature prepares to rest for the winter. This gradual transformation isn’t just for trees and wildlife, though. People also need time to reflect, grow, and reform. And incarceration, with its extra downtime, is the perfect place to reflect on what you might want to change in your life.

To face your future, you might need to start by looking at your past. Look at it closely. What has already begun to change? What still needs to change? Wherever you are, whoever you are or once were, NOW is a time for change and new beginnings with Jesus.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 SAYS,
“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

This verse means if you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior, then you belong to Him! And your old unhealthy life is behind you, and your new healthier life is ahead of you. God is already working in your life—in big ways or even in small—for your good.

Know that you are made a new person full of life, love, and redemption.

Just as the leaves change colors and animals reset, we are constantly changing, evolving, and turning over a new leaf when we call upon Jesus. Look for Jesus in the big and the small things, pray for new beginnings, and trust Jesus’ power to transform your life just as He transforms the fall trees. Say the Corinthians verse out loud as the first thing you do every morning and the last thing you do every evening.

NEED A BIBLE?
Get a free Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible!
NOW WITH A WORKBOOK!

WRITE TO:
Tyndale House Publishers
Attn: Inside Journal Bible
351 Executive Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Include this information to make sure your Bible or Workbook get delivered:
✓ Your complete name and prison ID number
✓ Your facility name
✓ Your facility address for prisoner parcel delivery
✓ Whether you want English or Spanish*

*Bibles and Workbooks are available in English or Spanish. You can order a Bible and Workbook together, or separately. Limit one order per person.

BEING RELEASED SOON?
Check out the Colson Scholarship started by Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship. The Colson Scholarship is available to eligible returning citizens who want to attend Wheaton College.

Who is Eligible?
Applicants must:
• Be a Christian
• Be a U.S. Citizen
• Have a felony record (Note: Felonies must NOT include sexual offenses, arson, or repeat violent offenses)
• Be out of jail or prison for at least one full year by April 1 of the application year
• Be established in a local church
• Be accepted into Wheaton College undergraduate or graduate school

To learn more, visit prisoninstitute.com/colson-scholarship. Or to get more tips and tools for a successful release, ask your chaplain to email us at insidejournal@pfm.org to order our free Inside Journal Reentry specialty edition.
**News + Notes**

**Spring and Summer Round-Up**

Prison Fellowship hosted a Hope Event like no other in Columbia, South Carolina. Hip-hop Grammy-winning hip-hop artist Lecrae and formerly incarcerated artist Jeff Walker, also known as SWAAG, headlined.

Lecrae, a frequent partner with Prison Fellowship, also performed at the Prison Fellowship Second Chance® Month Gala held in April, with a keynote message delivered by Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative and author of Just Mercy.

“I’m already accepted by God,” said Lecrae. “Because if you live for other people’s acceptance, you’re going to die from their rejection. When you realize you’re already accepted, you don’t really have to get extra bent out of shape over somebody disrespecting you. Because it’s like, Man, I’m already somebody.”

Angel Tree sports camps, such as the Dallas Cowboys event in June, gave kids an opportunity to receive encouragement and practice skills on the field with top-tier coaches and athletes. NFL player Kenny Clark, a former Angel Tree participant and frequent partner with Prison Fellowship, also hosted a camp in June with hundreds of kids.

Angel Tree camping is a chance for children to get away from the challenges of having an incarcerated parent—a place to have fun in the great outdoors, make new friends, and meet caring adult counselors.

Prison Fellowship partners with camping organizations to provide scholarships so that Angel Tree children can attend Christian summer camps.

At camp, children like Mike encounter the love of Jesus and discover hope for the future. One Christian camp in Missouri has become like a second home. “Camp introduced Christianity into my life,” said Mike. “I love that place. It’s like a home away from home. I have good friends there [that] I actually count as family. I think about them all the time.”

This summer, thousands of children across the country attended summer camps and experienced the love of God in the great outdoors. Mary, the grandmother of two Angel Tree kids who attended camp, said about her grandkids’ experience: “They have talked about it constantly and already asked to go again next year. They both loved all of the activities—many of them neither had ever done before (horseback riding, archery, etc.). They were excited to meet new friends and talked about the staff being so nice and fun to be around.”

To learn how your child can participate in Angel Tree sports camps or Angel Tree camping, your child’s caregiver can contact Prison Fellowship’s call center at 800.206.9764.