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Holding the Keys to Freedom

by Emily Andrews

When looking back on her life, Tammy says, “I shouldn’t be here.” By “here,” Tammy means the Oklahoma facility where she shares her story, as a former prisoner who now has prison office keys in her pocket. By “here,” she also means “alive.”

As a child, Tammy would often walk into the living room to find her father drunk, if he was there at all. Her mom would be asleep on the couch. She remembers it as a dark, filthy place.

Feeling neglected, Tammy ran away at age 13 to search for the love she craved. Instead, she found abusive relationships. At age 14, Tammy was pregnant with a baby girl, whom she gave up for adoption. By 15, Tammy was addicted to meth. She was once



photo by Kyle Frager

After spending decades in and out of prison, Tammy finally found the key to turning her life around and embracing her time behind bars as a gift.

beaten and left for dead by a stranger.

She continued struggling with addiction for years, often doing whatever it took to get drugs. Illegal activities such as forged checks led to various arrests, and she was in and out of

prison from her early 20s through her late 50s.

“I would go to prison, but I’d just come out the same person I was when I went in,” Tammy recalls. “I didn’t use my time wisely. My first incarcerations, I didn’t even try to

take advantage of the programs offered.”

Around age 50, Tammy was out of prison living a sober life with a wonderful husband named Al and a family. But she returned to drugs and crime and was arrested again. “I thought

my life was over,” Tammy says about this backslide. “Little did I know it was just beginning.”

Conquering decades of darkness

Tammy was incarcerated a fourth time. Facing a 20-year sentence, she said she didn’t expect Al to wait for her. For years, she struggled with the lies she’d been fed: that she was worthless, no good, a mistake. But Al helped her break free from those lies. He lovingly looked at her through the plexiglass. “What do you mean?” asked Al. “You’re my wife. Of course I will wait.”

In her cell, she held an envelope containing memories of missed family milestones—photos of graduations, weddings, her newborn grandchild.

Continued on page 2

5 Tips for Handling Painful Periods in Prison

by Cherise Bopape

Having a period while behind bars can be challenging. Although your menstrual cycle is a natural bodily function, you may still feel embarrassed when you get your period. And if your cycles are painful, they can disrupt your life. Here are five tips to help you handle painful periods with dignity.

1. Get the supplies you need—early!

Create a commissary spending plan for the supplies you’ll need to accommodate your monthly cycle. Stock up in advance so you’re not scrambling to buy supplies. If you have supportive loved ones, consider asking them to add money to your commissary account for your monthly feminine needs.



Prostock-Studio/Getty Images

Or ask your case manager or medical department for extra feminine supplies.

2. Know what’s available to you.

Government-issued pads are

of the most basic quality, and some state prisons don’t have the funding to supply a full week’s worth. So you could end up soiling your clothes and waiting for your designated laundry day to wash them. Again, rely on your outside support system (if you have one) to send extra undergarments. Just

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Letters to the Editor

Ginger in California

Because of my crime, I have lost everything. Not only did I hurt my victims financially and emotionally, I also hurt my family. There are far reaching consequences for what I did, and I know I will spend the rest of my life trying to right all my wrongs. When I am eventually released, I will be homeless and am afraid because of my age and being a felon, [it'll be] hard to find employment. Through your publication, though, I see where with God, putting Him first always,

that I know I have nothing to fear, and He will take care of my needs as long as I seek Him. Trust Him, lean on Him, and He will not let us down. I am hoping your organization may help me move forward in a positive way through the rest of my sentence and onto the transition of being paroled.

Dear Ginger:

You have a great perspective. Keep seeking God in all you do. Once you're released, check out job search websites like 70millionjobs.com.

Also visit prisonfellowship.org/resources and scroll down to the section called "Preparing for Reentry." There, you will find resources, tips, a national directory for reentry, and more. Be sure to follow all your release conditions and parole rules.

Monique in Louisiana

Being incarcerated isn't easy. However, it's through those tough days I've learned to push and press through. Every day I am learning that it's totally up to us on what we decide to do with the lemons that life gives.



Ekely/Getty Images

You can either keep the lemons and complain about how bitter they are, or you can decide to make lemonade, lemon cake, or lemon pie. ... Since being incarcerated, I've earned my AA and BA [degrees] and recently published my first motivational book for young girls and women. ... If you, I, and the rest of the world work at helping someone, then we will all be reaching someone. Always be willing to

help someone, and if for whatever reason you can't, be content knowing that someone else possibly can.

Dear Monique:

Your story and your attitude are inspiring! Thank you for sharing. God bless you on your journey to making lemon cake out of life's lemons.

Sincerely,
The Editorial Staff ■

NEED A BIBLE?

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WRITE TO:

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Attn: Inside Journal Bible
351 Executive Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Include this information to make sure your Bible or Workbook gets 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.



Keys to Freedom Continued from page 1

Looking back over her past sentences, she finally saw them as missed opportunities. "I felt like I'd totally wasted my life," she says, "and I finally said to myself, 'I don't want to do this anymore.'"

During her final prison sentence at Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, Tammy—desperate and exhausted—decided to visit a small chapel where Christian volunteers led a program.

The volunteers looked her in the eyes and spoke to her like she mattered. They taught her the Bible and Jesus's love. They led with kindness and compassion. When they said they would be there, they were true to their word.

"I couldn't get it—why these people would come and take their time out for me and other women like me. I didn't understand that," Tammy explains.

The chapel volunteers' sense of stability and purpose drew her in. She realized how much she wanted to be like them. She paid attention because they had keys to the prison: "If they had keys, I would listen to what they said, because I realized they

got to go home ... and they knew more than I did."

Life coming full circle

In 2015, Tammy finally walked free. She found a local church and worked with a nonprofit transitional ministry for women on the path to recovery. That's where she planned to retire, until a friend told her Prison Fellowship® was launching a new program in Oklahoma prisons.

Before long Tammy was back behind bars, but this time as Prison Fellowship Academy® program manager at Kate Barnard Correctional Facility, Oklahoma's first women's program of its kind. Some Academy participants were even her former cellmates. Every day, Tammy would walk up a hill with keys to her office, past the room where she lived as a prisoner.

After that, she led a new Academy

site at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center, and then she was promoted to a position of authority over even more Academy operations.

Tammy loves her life today. She is still married to Al, who stayed by her side like he promised. They bought their first home together in 2018. With time and with God's grace, Tammy has rebuilt relationships with her sons—relationships she once assumed were too broken to fix. Wherever she looks, she sees evidence of God's love—and the value she has as a person.

The advice she'd give incarcerated women is the same advice she wishes she could give her younger self: "I would tell the women that the time they've been given in prison can be a gift, if they use it to pursue a different life," she says. "Take advantage of this gift, and make a lasting change." ■



photo by Prison Fellowship

Unhappy Holidays: When We Feel Alone

by Dillon Shaw

During the last year of my incarceration, one of my deepest fears became a part of my reality. Around Christmas of 2019, nine short months before my earliest release date, my mother died. Her death was unexpected, and so was the intense storm of grief that followed. After she passed away, I experienced a depth of pain and loneliness that I never knew existed.

While pain must be acknowledged and processed, loneliness is a parasite that hitches a ride on whatever it can until it invades our minds. And like a parasite, loneliness needs a host. It clings to conflict and leeches off our insecurities. When abuse occurs, loneliness sneaks in undetected and uses shame or fear to push us deeper into isolation.

Loneliness can even hijack seasons meant to bring joy and togetherness. Whether it's as a result of poor choices, death, unhealthy habits, believing lies, or more, loneliness will use whatever tools necessary to make you feel alone and unworthy.

Have you recently experienced loneliness? Why is loneliness such a fearful or paralyzing experience? According to Psychology Today, "Though our need to connect is [instinctive], many of us frequently feel alone. Loneliness is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it. Even some people who are surrounded by others throughout the day ... still experience a deep loneliness. Research suggests that loneliness poses serious threats to well-being as well as long-term physical health."

Even the most independent introvert has a desire for connection with others. Sometimes the loneliness we experience is a result of what we think is true, not necessarily what is true.

Created for connection

In the Bible, God demonstrates the value of relationships over and over. God created man to have a relationship with Him in the garden of Eden. In Genesis 2, we're told that God said it wasn't good for man to be alone, so God provided a partner in Eve.

Throughout Exodus (especially chapters 1–34), God called the people of Israel to be His own special community, a chosen nation. Even God's decision to send His only Son to earth was about relationships: Jesus made the idea of an almighty God relatable. People could intimately connect with Jesus in a personal relationship.

God's call to every one of us is to live a life-long, life-giving relationship with Him. In Deuteronomy 31:8, Moses, a leader of God's people, declares, "Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."



RuthBlack/Getty Images

The truth that God will never abandon us is echoed throughout the entire Bible. Matthew 1:23 talks about the upcoming birth of Jesus, saying "[Mary] will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" We are never alone if we ask God into our hearts.

All we have to do is cry out to Him, and He will rescue us from the storms of life (Matthew 14:22–32).

A lighthouse in the darkness

At one point during that dark, cold, lonely storm of my mother's death, I felt like I was drowning in the pain. But I cried out to the God who loves you and me, the God who is willing to ease our loneliness and pain to be with us. And He met me in that darkness and assured me of the truth once again that He will never fail me or abandon me.

In that moment when I cried out, I felt a tug in my heart of God directing me to "Get up and go ask for help!" with a sense of urgency. So I walked out of my room, carrying the weight of my painful loneliness, still crying bitter tears. Just then, one of my closest friends, a follower of Jesus, was walking up the floor below me, and I asked him for help.

In John 14:15–23, Jesus declares that He will not leave us alone, but that He will

come to us. He promises that He and the Father will make their homes in the hearts of those who trust in Him. And even more, all those who trust in Him become a family, a community of belonging and purpose deeper than blood could ever run.

So this season, if you feel lonely, cry out to the God who promises to be with you. He will be with you. And make the move to reach out to those who follow Jesus because they will be with you too! ■

COLSON QUOTE CORNER:

In 1976, Chuck Colson—a political advisor who served under President Richard Nixon and was incarcerated for Watergate-related charges—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. Chuck passed away in 2012 at age 80, but his ministry continues to grow, with Prison Fellowship programming in all 50 states and Prison Fellowship International programming in more than 113 countries. ■



Photo by Prison Fellowship

"One of the most wonderful things about being a Christian is that I don't ever get up in the morning and wonder if what I do matters. I live every day to the fullest because I can live it through Christ and I know no matter what I do today, I'm going to do something to advance the Kingdom of God." —Chuck Colson

TIRED OF FEELING LONELY?

When you hit the pillow at night, does loneliness creep in? Even someone with dozens of friends can feel lonely. That's because humans can't fully satisfy our need to be understood and to feel loved unconditionally. Only God can fulfill that need. Numbers 23:19 talks about God being even more reliable than any person: "God is not a man, so He does not lie. He is not human, so He does not change his mind." James 4:8 asks us to turn to God above turning to the world: "Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world."

God created us for relationships, and not just with people, but with Him. He wants us to carve out quiet time and talk to Him. He says in Revelation 3:20, "I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." That doesn't mean God will show up in your cell with a plate of burgers tonight. But it means He will be there when you feel alone, curing your loneliness like the most amazing friend imaginable—if you let Him into your heart.

The biggest way God showed us His love is greater than any human affection was by sending His one and only Son Jesus to die as a payment for our sins, so that anyone who believes may have eternal life.

The next time you feel lonely, consider asking God into your heart and accepting His free gift of eternal salvation.

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

"Dear Jesus, I don't want to feel alone ever again. I surrender my life to You. I confess my sins and ask Your forgiveness. Please take away my loneliness. Help me to feel Your presence. Amen."

To learn more about Jesus or to sign up for a free correspondence Bible study through one of our trusted partner organizations, write to us at "LONELY," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. For a free Bible or accompanying study guide/workbook, see our ad on page 2.

OVERCOMING LONELINESS:

Activities for Isolation

by Stacia Ray

Christmastime Hallmark movies and TV commercials show families sharing meals together and bonding through laughter. But behind bars, life can sometimes feel pretty lonely. And not just during the holidays, but in any time of isolation, quarantine, or restrictive housing (segregation).

Thankfully, there are healthy ways to keep your brain engaged and help prevent loneliness. Here are five activities to distract you if you're ever stuck in isolation. Write to us to share any other activities that help you. And read the "Unhappy Holidays" article on the previous page to learn how we are never truly alone.

1. Perfect your penmanship.

The Inside Journal staff is blown away by the artistic handwriting of some of our readers in their letters to us. Handwritten letters and cursive writing are becoming more artful as typing becomes more common. To stay stimulated and keep away boredom, try different fonts and cursive styles. Try calligraphy. (See below.) Try writing left-handed if you're right-handed or writing right-handed if you're left-handed.

2. Serve selflessly.

Research shows that service is an act of connection that will help lift you from your loneliness. Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Although you can't directly serve others while you're isolated, isolation won't last

forever. Use this time alone to write out your strengths and be ready to offer help to others once you get out of isolation. Are you athletic? Develop an exercise routine or yoga moves you can teach others when you're no longer isolated. Artistic? Create coloring pages fellow prisoners can give to

their kids. Musical? Write inspirational songs to encourage others. And speaking of music ...

3. Practice the piano.

Use the [drawing below](#) to learn the piano keys. You can even teach yourself chords. Here are the chords for "Silent Night":

Silent Night (G),
holy night (G),
all is calm (D),
all is bright (G),
round yon Virgin (C)
Mother and Child (G)

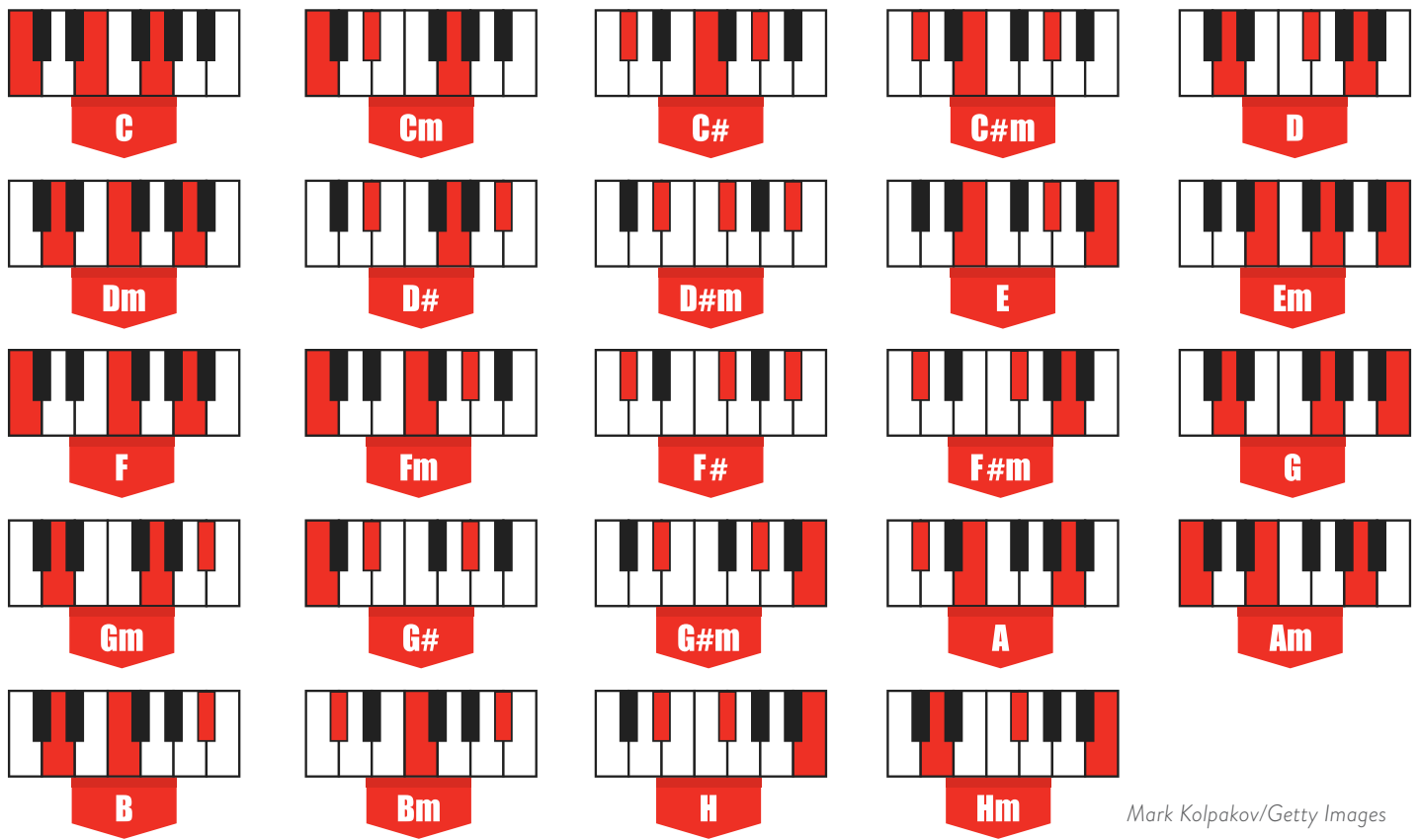
holy infant so (C)
tender and mild (G)
sleep (D)
in heavenly peace (G),
sleep in heavenly (D)
peace (G).

Other songs with these same three chords are "Come Thou Fount" and "Amazing Grace" (hymns), "Love Me Do" (The Beatles), "Sweet Home Alabama" (Lynyrd Skynyrd), "La Bamba" (Ritchie Valens), "Ring of Fire" (Johnny Cash), and more.

Piano & Chords



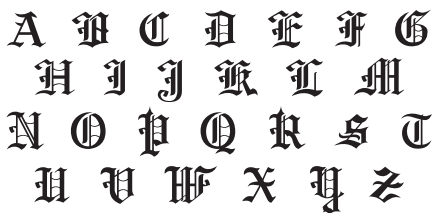
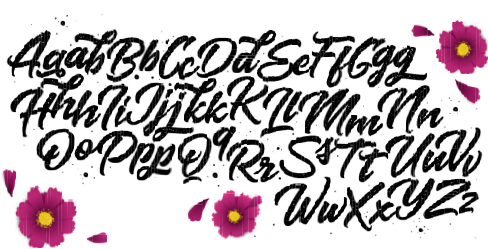
PeterHermesFurian/Getty Images



Mark Kolpakov/Getty Images

Calligraphy

Lefthand: Very Well/Getty Images
Middle: paseven/Getty Images
Righthand: geengraphy/Getty Images



4. **Meditate with a mandala.**

Deep breathing exercises are great for calming anxiety and loneliness. But did you know drawing repetitive patterns is another great way to soothe stress and move through difficult emotions? Take a few minutes to meditate, pray, or reflect on a favorite Bible verse while making the art project **to the right**.

5. **Love life.**

“If you make friends with yourself, you will never be alone,” wrote surgeon and author Maxwell Maltz. This might be easier said than done. But even when your self-esteem is low, you still have positive traits. And even on bad days, there are still blessings, if you look hard enough. List the things about yourself that you like. List the people or activities that bring you joy. List all the good parts of your day, even if the best part is that it’s over. You get to start fresh tomorrow. ■

Mandala
Meditation

This art project is based on a Prison Fellowship Create: New Beginnings (C:NB) in-prison workshop. C:NB is a program for incarcerated women, but the relaxation techniques used here can apply to both men and women.

Supplies:

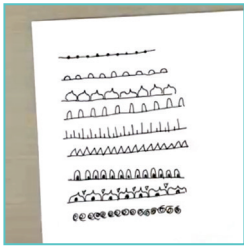
- Pencil
- Pen
- Paper
- Colored pencils (optional)

MAKING EMOTIONS INTO ART:
(Featuring the drawings of artist Stephanie Logan Segel)

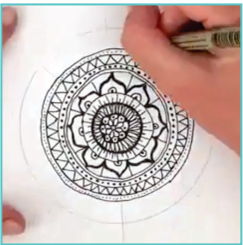
Directions:



Using a pencil, draw a circle in the center of your paper. This will be the largest of several circles you will draw. You can trace the base of a cup or other round object. But it doesn’t need to be perfect. Next, draw a smaller circle inside the larger one. Then draw an even smaller one inside of that. Continue with as many smaller circles as you’d like.



Some common shapes are: lines, dots, circles, small petals, bigger petals, triangles. Or create your own unique pattern.



Start from the center and build the mandala outward, using combinations of different sizes of your chosen shapes/ patterns.



You may decide to color your patterns using colored pencils. If so, use the time that you’re coloring to reflect on your emotions and process your feelings.



FROM THE INSIDE OUT:
Christmas Choir

Elizabeth in Florida reached out to Inside Journal to share this story, hopefully as an inspiration for other prisoners who may someday want to organize something similar. (Be sure to follow your facility’s rules and regulations.) “In early November [2021], I asked a respected inmate if she would be interested in helping to coordinate a Christmas choir. A

talented singer, she was instantly enthusiastic, and we started passing the word around the camp. We posted a notice on dorm bulletin boards for rehearsals and practiced for the next six weeks. On December 23 at 6 p.m. in the courtyard, the chorus of about 15 women performed around 12 secular and sacred songs, I read from Luke 2 and read the back story to the song ‘Silent Night,’ and



about a dozen of us performed sign language to ‘Silent Night.’ About 100 inmates, including performers, attended.

[That’s] half the camp! It lasted about 20 minutes and was an overwhelming success.” ■

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have an inspiring story you want to share with our readers? Or even a great recipe using commissary items? Please send your poems, recipes, or other works to: SUBMISSIONS, c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Please also write “I give Prison Fellowship permission to publish my submission” somewhere on your letter. NOTE: Submissions may be edited for content or space. Not all submissions will be printed. If selected, your works will be printed with your first name only; no last name or personal information will be included.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL TEAR-OUT

by Rose Shannon

Tear out this daily devotional and then start each morning and/or end each night saying it and praying over it. You'll be amazed by how a healthy spiritual habit like this can bring encouragement and focus to each day!

Promises That Keep

JOSHUA 21:45 SAYS:

“Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.”

Have you ever waited on a promise? Have you ever clung to what feels like the last piece of hope you have left? Maybe you're holding onto that hope right now. Perhaps it's the promise of a visit from a loved one, or an answer to a prayer you've whispered to God time and time again.

Just like a chef takes time to carefully prepare and gather all the best ingredients before cooking and serving a delicious meal, God takes time to prepare our hearts so we can really taste and appreciate the goodness of His promises to us. His timing is perfect, and sometimes His timing involves waiting.

The Bible tells us the story of one of the biggest promises ever made: the arrival of a Savior who would pay for the sins of the world.

The people of Israel waited hundreds of years, through persecution and slavery, to see the proof of what God had promised.

While they waited, God's people assumed He would send a Savior in the form of a strong ruler who would destroy their enemies with the sword and free them through political revolution.

Instead, God sent Jesus—a helpless little baby born in a small town. Although the fulfilled promise looked different, God's way was far better than what they could have imagined.

Think about that for a moment. Instead of sending a tough military giant, God sent His only Son, a tender, loving human who walked among His creation and intimately understood human suffering. Jesus, God in the flesh, desired a deep relationship with each one of His followers. Best of all, this compassionate and kind Jesus was still all-powerful, defeating sin and death through His eventual crucifixion and resurrection.

At Christmas, we celebrate the promised gift of eternal life through Jesus: the ultimate display of hope.

As you think about what you are hoping for right now, remember that God's promises, and His timing, are perfect and reliable. He is not like the people who have left you disappointed or empty-handed. God is ready to provide for you beyond your wildest dreams of hope. You need only to trust in Him.



RomoloTavani/Getty Images

Painful Periods

Continued from page 1

be sure to follow your facility's guidelines.

3. Don't suffer in silence.

You don't have to ignore your body's pain just because you know your period will end in a few days. See a nurse as soon as you can. A variety of medications are available, but you'll likely be prescribed acetaminophen or ibuprofen first. Stronger pain medications are typically reserved for women who live on the medical ward.

4. Speak up for yourself—again if necessary.

If you tried medicine and your pain persists, speak up! You may need something stronger. Follow your facility's procedures to make sure you get your health issues addressed as quickly as possible. However, because some women have a history of substance abuse, stronger pain medicine may take time to be approved or may get denied. Be persistent but patient.

5. Have inspiration ready for tough days.

Struggles you face during your cycle might cause you to feel powerless, frustrated, or humiliated. Consider these quotations as a source of inspiration.

“Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.”
—Psalm 139:14

“A woman with a voice is, by

definition, a strong woman. But the search to find that voice can be remarkably difficult.” —Melinda Gates, American businesswoman and philanthropist

“You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.” —Oprah Winfrey, TV personality, philanthropist, and entrepreneur

“You cannot have those things you refuse to dream of.” —Stacey Abrams,

Georgia-based politician and author

Your period can be a challenge—especially behind bars. You may encounter pain. You may not have easy access to feminine products. You may even experience period shaming. But don't let those things stop you from getting your needs met. Get equipped with knowledge and be empowered—one month at a time. ■

2023 CALENDAR

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” —John 16:33

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
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HOLIDAYS

JAN. 1 – New Year's Day
JAN. 16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
FEB. 14 – Valentine's Day
FEB. 20 – Presidents Day
APRIL 9 – Easter
MAY 14 – Mother's Day
MAY 29 – Memorial Day
JUNE – Ask your chaplain for an Angel Tree participation form.

JUNE 18 – Father's Day
JULY 4 – Independence Day
AUGUST – Don't forget to submit your Angel Tree participation form.
SEPT. 4 – Labor Day
NOV. 11 – Veterans Day
NOV. 23 – Thanksgiving Day
DEC. 25 – Christmas Day

IMPORTANT DATES:

NEWS + NOTES

by Emily Andrews

Civil Rights Restored to Virginians

The Decarceration and Community Reentry Clinic* at the University of Virginia (UVA) School of Law is shedding light on the issues people face after prison. Recently, clinic student Meredith Kilburn helped restore a man's civil rights by submitting a petition to the Charlottesville, Virginia, circuit court on his behalf.

Those convicted of felonies are often prohibited from carrying, or even being in the presence of, a firearm. If they ride in a car with a gun owner or visit someone who has a gun in their home, for example, they are at risk of being rearrested.

Whitmore Merrick Jr. served time after riding in a car where a gun was found. He now works as a reentry peer navigator helping former prisoners learn how to have a successful reentry.

Merrick has put his justice system experience to use by mentoring others. He also volunteers in his community and founded a movement supporting local returning citizens.

With the help of UVA law students, Merrick's Second Amendment right to possess a firearm was restored May 17.

His colleague Shadee Gilliam's same right was

restored May 26.

Helping restore their civil rights "didn't even feel like a hard issue for me," Kilburn told UVA news, "because it was clear they deserve every right that every other citizen has, because they do just as much—if not more—for Charlottesville and the community than other people who do have all their rights."

**The Decarceration and Reentry Clinic at UVA is not affiliated with or endorsed by Prison Fellowship. Reentry clinics such as this are independently operated, and their policies/procedures vary by state and by organization.*

Sneak Peek: Second Chance Month Is Coming!

Since 2017, Prison Fellowship has led the charge to celebrate April as Second Chance Month®.

This nationwide effort exists to unlock brighter futures for people with a criminal record. In 2022, more than 700 church congregations, businesses, and organizations partnered with Prison Fellowship to celebrate second chances throughout April. The White House even issued an official declaration.

At Prison Fellowship, we believe every person has value and potential to make good on a second chance. Every person should have an

opportunity to succeed once they have paid their debt to society. And the start of a new year is a great time to begin thinking about how you can advocate for second chances all year long—because all of us have a role to play.

Did you know you can celebrate second chances before your release date? Prison Fellowship hosts Second Chance 5K events, as well as prayer walks, to raise awareness and support for returning citizens. You can organize your own Second Chance Month walk on the yard with a friend or two (be sure to comply with your facility's rules and regulations).

Prayer is another powerful tool you can use to support second chances while still incarcerated. You can start with this simple prayer. Perhaps you can say this prayer every evening in April in honor of Second Chance Month:

God, thank You for providing the ultimate second chance through Jesus Christ. Because of His death and resurrection, I have hope for tomorrow. Help me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. Thank You for the promise of redemption!

Successful reentry is the goal when you



READER RECIPES

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

Mocha's Dippy Dip

Submitted by Jesse in Texas

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 bag of tortilla chips
- 1 bag/container of refried beans
- 1 package of cream cheese
- 1 bottle of hot sauce (amount varies)
- 1 bag of pork skins/rinds
- 1 bottle of squeeze cheese
- 1 pouch of chunky chicken



bhofack2/Getty Images

DIRECTIONS:

Put refried beans in a bowl and microwave to medium consistency. In a separate bowl, mix chunky chicken, cream cheese, and hot sauce (how much depends on how spicy you like it). Make a layer of beans using half the refried beans. Then add a layer of the chicken mix. And finally, top with remaining beans. Sprinkle crushed pork skins/rinds over the top, followed by desired amount of squeeze cheese. Use tortilla chips to scoop the dip. Enjoy! ■

are released. When you get out, you want to stay out! But second chances start before your release. You can prepare for reentry by understanding your parole conditions, getting ready for the job search, finding a potential church to attend, and more. The more prepared you feel before your release, the better off you'll be after you're out. ■



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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 in Illinois (wheaton.edu).

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.

Once you have access to a computer, use this link to go to the Colson Scholarship Page: <https://correctionalministries.org/colson-scholarship/>

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