

# JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison



FEBRUARY 2019

Dear Mentor,

When I gather with men in prison each week, we often discuss situations that involve conflict and violence. One day I asked these men to imagine their world without fighting, violence and revenge.

“What would it look like if you all lived in peace on this compound?” I asked, intending to help them think about positive ways to respond to conflicts in their midst. Maybe this could prompt discussions about ways to reduce violence and stealing. Maybe they could even brainstorm ways to show more kindness and care to those around them.

“You can’t have peace without war!” was the unexpected response.

Peace requires war? That strong, edgy statement took me by surprise. Reflecting on this viewpoint, I realized that these men see aspects of war every day. The realities of the prison yard can be harsh. One must keep an eye out for potential harm around every corner.

But Christ came to show us another way. The way of peace.

This is not the kind of peace we may typically imagine. We might think about peace as simply the absence of war, which can be temporarily achieved by the sword. Many kingdoms and governments have done this. In Jesus’ day, the “peace” of Rome was achieved and maintained by violence. This idea of violence as the means to peace is nothing new. It continues today all over the world.

But Jesus came to show us the way to lasting peace. This type of peace cannot be achieved by violently removing violence. This type of peace involves not only the *subtraction* of violence and hate but also the *addition* of something. Jesus brought love and forgiveness—the only way to establish lasting peace. He showed us love and forgiveness in their truest and most powerful forms on the cross, where He bore all the violence and hate of the world, turned His cheek and forgave.

When we choose not to return violence with violence, gossip with gossip or judgment with judgment, and we choose instead to forgive, we are following the way of peace that Jesus modeled.

As 1 Peter 3:9 instructs us, “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”

As you write letters to your students who live in environments of hate and violence, encourage them to follow the path of Jesus—a path that has been blazed by forgiveness, mercy and repaying evil with good.

Years ago, when I first stepped into a Honduran prison with a pastor friend, the staff was reluctant to allow us to enter. As we talked to the captain of the prison, my friend said:

“We come in peace.”

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Those words opened the gates to that prison for us for years to come, and I have never forgotten them. They are words to live by as we extend love, hope and mercy and invite people to imagine a world of perfect peace that we will see one day when Jesus returns.

Serving alongside you,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Cupery".

Douglas Cupery  
Church Mobilization Director

## NEWS & NOTES FOR MENTORS

### New Reporting System Taking Effect Soon

Although we hoped to launch our new database this month, the final stages are not quite complete. We apologize for any confusion. We are working hard to launch our new database and online mentor portal **within the next few months**.

Once the new database launches, there will be a change to the way you “score” lessons. You will no longer count the number of incorrect answers and report that number to Crossroads. Instead, you will be asked to evaluate each student’s work in three key categories: completion, understanding and application.

You will receive a packet in the mail before the database launches. The documents in the packet will provide further details and instructions related to the new database.

### Do We Have Your Current Contact Information?

We are asking mentors to make sure their contact information on file with Crossroads is up to date. If you haven’t already, please take a moment to contact the Crossroads office with your email address and phone number. Having an accurate email address for you is especially important because we will be emailing a link to you to activate your new Crossroads mentor portal account when it launches. Please email [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) or call 800-668-2450 to verify your email address and phone number.

### New Course Making an Impact

The new course we introduced last year, *Who Are You?*, is making a big impact on the lives of our students. More than 50 percent of students who have completed this course indicated that they want to learn more about giving their life to Jesus.

Here is what one student recently wrote to us after completing the course: “I believe the best part of the course is the short essay questions because these are personal answers and truly capture what the student is thinking. Also, receiving feedback from the mentor was the best part of the course. I learned more when reading my mentor’s feedback.”