



Growth Ministries Inc.

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## CHALLENGING YOUR WAY OF THINKING

MINISTER TERRANCE SAUNDERS, GMI VOLUNTEER

Who are you normally? Who are you or what do you become when facing a difficult or challenging time in your life? These are questions I ask myself when I face these moments.

Do you view things as the glass half empty or half full? What has shaped your thoughts this way... family, friends, surroundings, current state or condition?

What does your stained-glass window project out? Whose stained-glass window are you looking through? I often times felt misunderstood or misinterpreted. Well, I had to step back and recondition my way of thinking in order to see movement in my state of being.

They say attitude reflects altitude. They say perspective is reality. Attitude and perspective matter... despite the situation! Those two simple words (ATTITUDE and PERSPECTIVE) were the first things I needed to change in my life. Once I shifted my way of thinking, things dramatically transformed for me. Do I still struggle with it... absolutely! Which is why I must remember who I am and to whom I belong!

Remember it is you who holds the brush and paints the picture. What did or do you create with the tools you were given? Christ took his brush and dipped it in his red blood, and covered up my black sin and made it white as snow. That's a master piece considering what my slate looked like!

But if we look at the canvas HE started with in his life (Matthew 27:27-50), could you imagine the finished product looking so majestic... pure beauty in the eyes of God? (Matthew 3:17) He is willing to architect for you, if he already hasn't done so... in spite of your past.

Christ showed that through it all, his situation was only going to show how much he truly loved us. The characteristic he displayed was one of sacrifice. What does your character and condition say about you? Your situation or circumstances don't define you; they only redefine who you are. YOU'RE A CHAMPION!

Are you making the best of the situation? Are you the change you want to see happen?

Remember this when you feel like you're being buried... "YOU'RE A SEED!"

This article is to encourage and challenge your way of thinking. Speak life over yourself and those around you. Be the change you want to see!

5 Tips:

- 1) Speak life over yourself
- 2) Remove negative people from your life or remove yourself from the situation
- 3) If it doesn't feed you... it's not growing you
- 4) Mind over matter... if you don't mind, then it don't matter
- 5) Have a support system to continually feed positivity

**Matthew 3:17 NIV**

***"O And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."***

## A LETTER FROM YOUR MOM

TARI CANNON, GMI GUEST WRITER



Hello Son, ☺

I was sitting here reminiscing about you. My mind was pondering about where you are, what you are doing and who you have become. I remember my dreams for your future. Watching you grow, laughing at the little quirkiness that was you. Son, this is not what I desired for you, for us. I sit and think about you; your smile, how it lights up my heart. When I would see you and get the hug that only you give. I miss you son.

But in my times of missing you, I wonder about the man you have become. I know the environment you are now in, hinders your movement and the activities you can participate in. I get it, but you chose the man you are. How's your heart? The part that makes you totally unique, the part you, yourself may have forgotten about. Simply because of where you are, your environment...that does not define you. Whatever happened to your dreams? Son, is your vision dead? So today, I want to remind you of who you ARE. Don't just read the words, LISTEN to your heart.

Remember the ideas you had? You were so bright in ways that only you could see things differently, but it made sense to you. You were adventurous, running head on to tackle anything. You were full of laughter, full of hope, you were full of LIFE. As you grew, you began to change. You were not so open to talk, you smiled and joked but the life was not in the laughter. You became hidden from me. I don't know what or when it happened, but my son became hurt and angry. I honestly don't know if I was the cause of the pain you hid. I saw you struggling. I saw you fighting to make a place for the pain to be pushed down. I saw it and I couldn't do a thing about it.

So here and now, I apologize. I apologize for the times I didn't listen. When I was too busy with my life to pay attention to yours, forgive me. I apologize for the words; the words I spoke in anger; the words I spoke with the intention to hurt. Forgive me for the words I spoke to you because of the frustration I felt, because I thought "I was the momma", and I should have known. I should have seen, I should have done more, forgive me. I apologize for everything I was responsible for that helped push you away. For the times I walked away because of the unseen pain you caused me and I would not share. For every mistake I made because you were my first child and I didn't know better. Please forgive me.

But this Mother's Day, I want to give you a gift. My gift is how I see you in my dreams, in my heart. I see a strong man. I see a man that can handle adverse situations. I see a man striving to repair the broken bridges of the past. I see a man that's starting to be honest about the effects of his actions. Yes, there are those you think have not forgiven you. But don't focus on them. Focus on your heart because you can't truly forgive others if you haven't forgiven yourself. The only person to teach us how to forgive is the One that forgave the most, Jesus Christ. Learn of Him. He is the Repairer of the Breach. He is the Giver of Hope.

I love you,  
Mom

## "FROM THE YARD"

GARNETT TOLEN. – LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AND GMI AMBASSADOR  
 (Each month we will bring you content from one of your brothers inside)

James 1:2-6 (in the NIV) We as believers know that when situations come our way, by trusting and believing in our Lord and Savior, we shall overcome.

The move (transition) that you are going through may be for the best for some, and may not be for others. However, if we hold on to "**now**" and don't progress for the "**future**", then all is wasted.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) we need to stop listening to the naysayers, and hold on to God's unchanging hands. Our peers, family, and homies all have something to say when it comes to your best interest, but what does the Lord say? "Trust in Him". Can you begin to imagine what your life would be like if you listened to our Lord just as much, if not more, than we do our so-called loved ones?

Let us learn to embrace change, because as we grow we are going to find ourselves in James 1:2-6. One thing for sure and two things for certain you will be missed.

My shout out goes to Thompkins Bey (Big Solly), Bedford (Beetle Juice aka Sekani), Copridge (Litif or Green Eyes), Brown, Cory (Kefele), Lewis, D. (Mustafa aka Hollywood), Lee, U. (Camara), Hicks, G., Ransom, K. (Blizz). These brothers made an impact in my life, as well as others.

God has a purpose, and blessing in store for you. Just continue to trust and believe and hold on to "**Change**".

Your Brother  
 In Christ  
 Garnet Tolen (Luqmon)

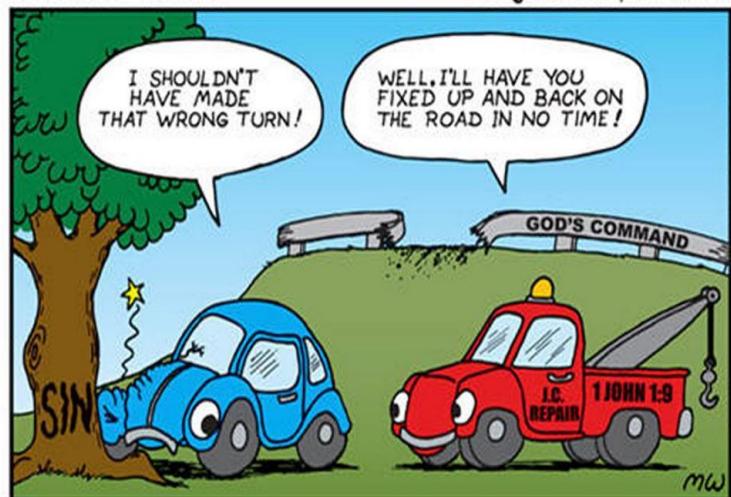
## "WORDS TO GROW BY"

LINDA LEWIS, GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Happy Moments,  
**Praise God**  
 Difficult Moments,  
**Seek God**  
 Quiet Moments,  
**Worship God**  
 Painful Moments,  
**Trust God**  
 Every Moment  
**Thank God**  
**And Always Remember,**  
**We can complain and remain, or**  
**praise and be raised.**  
**Thessalonians 5:18**

### WRONG TURN

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- 1 JOHN 1:9 NIV

Time for a little word search fun. Can you find each one of these famous characters in the bible?

ADAM  
ABRAHAM  
EVE  
CAIN  
ABEL  
NOAH  
DAVID  
MATTHEW  
JESUS  
PAUL  
SAUL

SOLOMON  
MARK  
LUKE  
SAMPSON  
GOLIATH  
RUTH  
MARY  
TIMOTHY



E	Y	A	B	R	A	H	A	M	E	O	L	A	M
M	A	R	K	N	C	S	H	J	H	O	O	B	A
O	E	D	I	L	R	A	O	O	S	A	M	E	R
A	N	S	R	U	T	H	I	H	T	M	I	L	Y
Y	L	S	M	A	S	A	H	N	L	A	H	M	L
U	S	R	N	S	A	N	O	A	H	U	T	U	A
T	E	A	T	I	M	O	T	H	Y	A	A	A	D
D	I	V	K	O	P	G	J	I	P	R	I	P	A
A	R	H	E	N	S	E	S	E	O	S	L	A	M
V	M	S	O	L	O	M	O	N	S	S	O	A	D
I	V	A	A	L	N	H	D	I	C	U	G	I	A
D	A	H	L	J	M	R	L	U	K	E	S	M	Y
J	A	L	W	E	H	T	T	A	M	U	I	S	R
E	A	U	M	I	A	A	A	H	E	M	S	T	L

## CLOSING WORDS

LONNIE JOHNSON, GMI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May is the month we celebrate Mother's Day. It is the month that we reflect on the love, nurturing and care given to us by the one whose womb God placed us in. Some of us still have our mothers with us on earth and some do not. Some of us have good relationships with our mothers and some do not. For many of us Mom was the last one to believe our lies, turn a blind eye to our scandalous ways and smile when she would see us no matter how many times we broke her heart.

Proverbs 19:26 says "Whoever robs their father and drives out their mother is a child who brings shame and disgrace." But God's **mercy** and **grace** can overcome any **disgrace** if we repent.

This is my challenge to you: If your mother (or grandmother) is still living, write or call her and simply tell her you love her and you are sorry for all the pain you may have caused her over the years. Leave it at that. Do not wait for her to say she forgives you or be upset if she doesn't. If you don't have your mom in your life anymore, then encourage a young man to do this same thing with his mom.

I took my mother for a wild ride most of my life. I gave her a lot of stress and grief over the years. I was fortunate to have her see me turn my life around before she passed.

Growth Ministries Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose belief system is Christian based with a passion and desire to assist individuals improve spiritually and socially through a variety of services, activities, and events.