

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another

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“WORDS TO GROW BY”

LINDA LEWIS AKA HOLLYWOOD'S MOTHER
GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Trust and Believe

God has a **purpose** for your
pain,

A **reason** for your struggle,
And a **reward** for your
faithfulness.

Trust Him and don't give up.
And remember;

Keep your head up!

God gives His hardest battles
to His Strongest Soldiers
and by His Grace...you can
make it!

Isaiah 41:10

HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY

St. Patrick's Day celebrates the Roman Catholic feast day of the patron saint of Ireland. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461. But did you know that he wasn't even Irish?

Patrick's birth name was Maewyn. He was born in Roman Britain. He was kidnapped into slavery and brought to Ireland.

He escaped to a monastery in Gaul (France) and converted to Christianity. He went back to Ireland in 432 as a missionary. While Christianity had already taken hold in the country, tradition has it that Patrick confronted the Druids at Tara and abolished their pagan rites, making Christianity more widespread.

Patrick became a bishop and after his death was named Ireland's patron saint. Celebrations in Ireland were understated though. When the Irish emigrated to the U.S., they created the bigger celebrations and parades known today.

Eighteenth century Irish soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War held the first St. Patrick Day parades. The celebrations became a way for the Irish to connect with their roots after they moved to America.

Fun Facts:

The shamrock: According to legend St. Patrick used the three-leaf clover (or shamrock) to explain the Trinity.

Dyeing the river green: The practice of dyeing the river green started in Chicago in 1962, when city officials decided to dye a portion of the Chicago River green.

Corn beef and cabbage: This is an Irish American dish. Irish Americans were so poor they could not afford certain meals. On St. Patrick's Day, the best meal they could afford was beef and cabbage. It became a staple for the holiday.

WAIT ON THE LORD

CHASTITY STEMMONS; FOUNDER OF CHASTITY STEMMONS ENTERPRISES

McDonald's was founded May 15, 1940. Before its popularity spread, people never really knew what **fast food** was. Our mothers and grandmothers cooked all day while we played outside in the scorching sun (drinking from a hose because we better not come inside)! As painful as it was, it helped all of us learn to wait and to learn that **waiting is hard**. We all know the feeling of waiting for something we're really looking forward to - we can see it, smell it, and almost taste it! And while we're standing there thinking about it over and over again the seconds, minutes, and days **drag on forever**.

Recently, I had that experience with a package I was waiting for. I wanted it to arrive ASAP but it seemed it would never come! I wanted to tell the package when to arrive, but apparently it was on its own schedule. There was no way around it - I had to wait.



Waiting for something to happen is one problem, but waiting for a difficult period of life to end is quite another. It was just that situation that the children of Israel found themselves in when the Book of Isaiah was written. Their sin had landed them in the midst of a long, hard season of captivity that seemed as if it would never end, and God had sent the prophet to encourage them with these now famous words:

**"But those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint."**

-Isaiah 40:31 New King James Version (NKJV)

Although their captivity was **painful** and seemed **endless**, God promised that if they would wait on Him to bring it to an end at the proper time, they would receive strength and courage from the presence of God in their lives to walk, run, and fly through their tough situations. The Lord himself assured them that He would renew and refresh them to make it through because **He had a greater plan** - not just for them - but for the world with the coming of Christ. Just as you must sometimes pull forward (even in the McDonald's drive-through line) and **wait** to get fresh, hot fries, the people of God had to put action with their faith and keep moving forward to get what He had for them.

As you wait on the Lord, be steadfast in prayer, worship, good works, and preparation. He will show up in your daily life and renew your strength!

Inside – Out BY CURTIS WOOTEN

This month we are sharing a piece by a brother that was recently released from KDOC and is doing well.

This is a message from a person who has been in and out of prison on multiple occasions. I can say today that change doesn't start tomorrow, change starts now! The discipline, the desires, and the goals that one wishes to display in the future, is cultivated by daily behavior.

Some of the struggles that may have been present before one's incarceration may or may not be there when one is released. New problems and opportunities have the ability to occur which takes a great deal of discipline and understanding to make the proper choices. Keeping God first is also a challenge. And know that you are not alone in this area. 1st Peter 5:8-9.



Be sober; be vigilant;
because your adversary the devil
walks about like a roaring lion,
seeking whom he may devour.
Resist him.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (New King James Version)

There is a difference between selfishness and self-preservation, what is bad vs. what is good, what you want vs. what you need, and who you can help vs. who can help you.

Inspired by 1st Corinthians 13:11; "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."

Stories of Ex-Convicts Who Turned Their Lives Around

Each month we will try to share with you a case of an individual who has been released from prison and went on to make a positive impact on society.

The World's Most Flexible Man



While doing time in prison can be a hardening experience for most people, Mukhtar Gusengajiev used his time there to soften himself up. Gusengajiev was just 17 years old when he fell in with the wrong crowd and was ultimately sentenced to three years for partaking in a fight. While serving his time, Gusengajiev dedicated himself wholeheartedly to practicing meditation and flexibility exercises. After he was released from prison, Gusengajiev did a

series of odd jobs before finally ending up in Moscow, where he performed as an artist at a government-owned circus.

Gusengajiev got his big break in 1995 when he was noticed by Jean-Claude Van Damme, who invited him to perform for his movie. Although that movie was ultimately scrapped, that invitation did get Gusengajiev to Las Vegas, where he later became famous for his mind-bending feats of flexibility. Since then, Gusengajiev has performed in several prominent events around the world and taught countless people that discipline can help them achieve their goals in life.

A Poem

Fear and Trembling

by Deborah Ann Belka

You can pursue God's Word,
whenever you want
but if you don't apply it
what have you got?

You can study your Bible,
all night and all day
but if you don't obey it
you'll just lose your way.

You can go to church,
sit in your Sunday pew

but, the rest of the week
what is it that you do?

You can go to small groups,
share all you know
but, if you don't live it
it is all done for show.

You can read and study,
sermons you can hear
but, is God working in you
trembling and fear?

Philippians 2:12

**"Wherefore, my beloved,
as ye have always obeyed,
not as in my presence only,
but now much more in my
absence, work out your own
salvation with fear and
trembling."**



Just for Laughs



I'd Love to be Six Again

A man asked his wife what she'd like for her birthday. "I'd love to be six again," she replied.

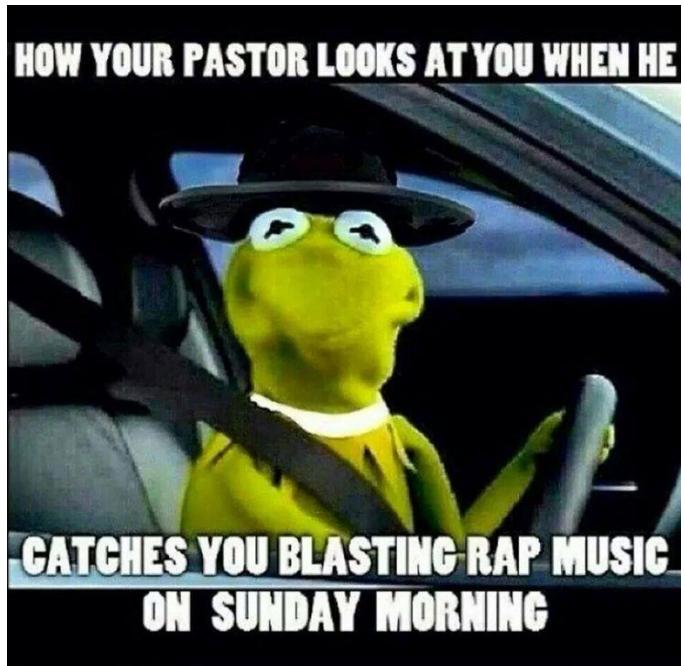
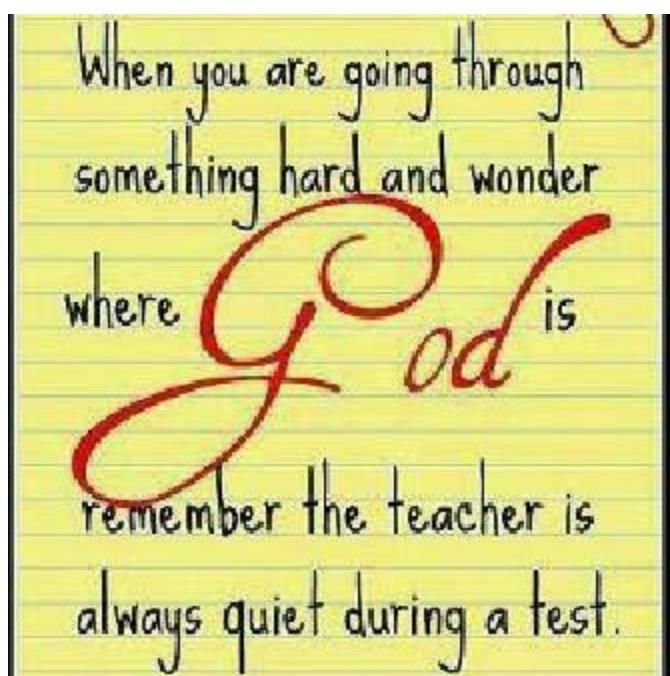
On the morning of her birthday, he got her up bright and early and off they went to a local theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park: the Death Slide, the Screaming Loop, the Wall of Fear--everything there was! Wow!

Five hours later she staggered out of the theme park, her head reeling and her stomach upside down. Right to McDonald's they went, where her husband ordered her a Big Mac along with extra fries and a refreshing chocolate shake. Then it was off to a movie - the latest Star Wars epic, and hot dogs, popcorn, Pepsi Cola, and M &Ms. What a fabulous adventure! Finally, she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed.

He leaned over and lovingly asked, "Well, dear, what was it like being six again?"

One eye opened. The wife said, "You idiot, I meant my dress size!"

The moral of this story is: If a woman speaks and a man is actually listening, he will still get it wrong.



Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, GMI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If You are not Growing, You are Dying

I have met individuals well into their 30s, 40s and 50s that still act like teenagers. I have also heard it said that many individuals in jail often behave the age that they were when they were incarcerated. There are a number of reasons that some people just stop growing mentally, emotionally and even spiritually.

I want to take a moment to talk about your spiritual growth. As Christians, we have to constantly feed our spirit a healthy diet of prayer, meditation, God's Word and the company of other believers. If we only feed our fleshly or worldly desires then our spirit man starts to wither little by little until we are dead inside. We find ourselves separated from God. Jesus tells us that He came to give us "life" and have it abundantly.

Do you feel spiritually weak? Do you feel spiritually tired? Do you put off reading your bible, praying or sharing your faith with others? It is a good chance that you are suffering from spiritual malnutrition. Get in the habit of reading a verse every morning or just before you go to bed. Ask God to help you understand what it means how to apply it to your life. Maybe you can ask how you can help out more at church. Inch your way into new diet of spiritual bliss and start your new growth process.

Matthew 4:4

But he answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

What must I do to be saved?

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness, and wish to be connected to Him then take a moment and say the prayer below:

"Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen."

Romans 10:9 says that *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 9045, Kansas City, KS 66112