



As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

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"WORDS TO GROW BY"

LINDA LEWIS
GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

SUCCESS

To laugh often and much,
To win the respect of intelligent
people and the affection of
children,
To earn the appreciation of honest
critics
And endure the betrayal of false
friends.
To appreciate beauty,
To find the best in others!
To leave the world a bit better,
Whether by a healthy child,
A garden patch
Or a redeemed social condition,
To know even one life has breathed
easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.
**Proverbs 16:3 NIV – Commit to the
Lord whatever you do and He will
establish your plans.**

THIS MONTH WE CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY

The one thing we all have in common is that we all were born of a mother. Some of us had great relationships with our moms. If it had not been for our mom praying for us, we may be in a worse place than we are now. Some of us did not have such a wonderful relationship. Some of us never knew our mom. Some of us were raised by grandparents, aunts, foster parents or even adopted.

But regardless of that person's direct blood relationship to us, I can venture and say that each of us had at least one woman in our lives who we looked to for nurturing, strength and love. Who was that person in your life? Who is the lady that looked after you, changed your diaper, tried to teach you manners or overlooked your defects?

If she's alive take a moment and send her a letter letting her know how much you appreciate her. Give her a call if you can and just say "Thanks for everything." If you can't contact her, then take a moment and let God know that you appreciate Him putting her in your life for whatever amount of time it was.

Moms are a wonderful gift from God. From the day we are born to the day we die, they are always looking out for us, cleaning up our messes and loving us unconditionally.

A few facts about Mothers:

- There are over 2 billion moms in the world
- Mothers do about 88% of the laundry in the US
- The mom with the most kids was in Russia. She gave birth to 69 children between 1725 and 1765
- Mother's Day is the most popular day for eating out.
- Every sweater that Mr. Rogers wore in Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was hand-knitted by his mother
- While Mother's Day is the busiest for phone calls, Father's Day is the busiest for collect calls
- 72% of moms with children over 1-year-old work (about the same as childless women), vs. 39% in 1976
- Rosanna Dalla Corte gave birth to a baby boy when she was 63 years old in Italy in 1994

A LETTER TO MY SON...IN PRISON BY CHERYL "CJ" DOUGLAS, GROWTH MINISTRIES WRITER



My son, my son, my son.

Another Mother's Day, and I could not see your handsome face. Oh, how I love and miss you. You may be out of my sight but never out of my heart. My continuous prayer is that all is well with you. I looked at your pictures on the mantle, such a busy little fella you were, always wanting to do things your way. Then running to me when things went wrong, so I could kiss the pain away. Well, your plans and mine didn't quite work out the way we planned. Woulda,

coulda, shoulda don't matter or help now. **BUT... there is one who yet has a plan that will work for you.** The Lord God Almighty, yeah, you knew I was gonna go there. Son, the Lord loves you even in the condition you're in. He can do more for you than I or anyone else can. Son, do you love the Lord? I did all I knew to do so you would know Him. I've been talking to the Lord, and He told me to tell you that He is still in control, no matter what it looks like. He assured me that He will be your shepherd, He would lead you into a peaceful place, and you just need to be still. He said he would restore you, and lead you into His righteousness. He would keep you safe in the dark places. There will be no need to fear for He will be with you. Others will begin to notice that something is special about you. He will never leave you... if you don't let Him.

I know you have your dark times. I have mine too. When it gets dark, I pray. I pray all the time, everywhere, and I know God hears me, and He answers too. Son, He will do the same for you. So, when the darkness comes, and the little boy in you peeks out in tears, I'm sorry I can't be there, but God is there. Talk to Him. Tell Him all that is on your mind and heart. He will understand even what you can't. Ask Him what to do. Listen, keep asking, and keep listening Son then do what He tells you to do, or not to do. My Momma usta tell me not to make the mistake of praying to God and then deciding for yourself what to do. God does answer, but not always when we want. I have found that when it seems hard to pray, that is when we should pray the hardest. You've tried everything else, whatcha got to lose?

I'm looking at your last picture. You sure are handsome, and I know God has something good planned for you, even in prison. I know it's hard for you there, and you're feeling all kinda crazy things, but I just believe that somewhere down inside of you, God is there. Find him Son. Call out to Him. He will answer. Now I know there are some other men in that prison, that's talking to the Lord and doing what's right, so you go find them. Talk to them. They've been where you are. Someday soon I'm gonna see that handsome face, and the change that God has made. Don't keep me waiting too long. ☺

Well... I'm gonna close now before the paper gets too wet. I love you. I love you. I love you.

MOMMA

Adversity BY NICHOLAS MARTIN AKA KHALIL, INMATE AT LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

"IF THOU FAINT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY, THY STRENGTH IS SMALL!" PROVERBS 24:10

These words mean so very much to me as I reflect upon recent events in my life. About five years ago, I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a tumor in my head the size of a pea. For months and months afterwards, I slowly began to forget things about my life. The lowest point for me then is when I was looking at a photo of my then newborn baby girl (who is the spitting image of me) and was unable to remember her name or her birthday. I had to have an emergency surgery to remove the tumor that went undiagnosed and then round after round of chemo.

Finally, I thought I could breathe a sigh of relief when the doctors discovered there was no cancer remaining in my body. Slowly and steadily, I began the process of re-learning how to spell, do math, and history (both personal and world). All of this "knowledge" that people seem to be so impressed by now comes from long hours of hard work by me to re-educate myself so that I could be the best father I could be for my PUMPKIN. Cancer resurfaced...and struck like a thief in the night. Acute Meroblastic Leukemia, which is a kind of bone cancer and difficult to treat because it is in my bone marrow; the stuff that produces the white blood cells that your body uses to heal itself.

Twice, over the next year and half, I literally was on my death bed. The doctors were telling me that I would not see my Pumpkin's second birthday. I was unable to see her on visits because both of our immune systems could not risk being compromised. My wife had a hard time seeing me, because I looked like death. Throughout this time, I maintained my faith, that the Lord still had work for me to do and that this sickness was HIS WAY of getting my attention. Chemotherapy is worse than the cancer itself, and after 12 rounds of very intense chemo, I found myself in remission. No trace of the cancer to be found. Every day is a blessing, and I have done my best to live my life in a way that bears witness to my faith.

Now after years of remission, I recently learned that the cancer has resurfaced. I know that the road ahead is hard and full of adversity. Despite not wishing to deal with this beast again, I have been putting on the "FULL ARMOR OF GOD!!!!" "NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST ME WILL PROSPER...!" "I CAME SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY." I will not go quietly into the night; not because I believe that my life is overly valuable, but I know that the LORD I serve still has work for me. So, I took a few days to wrap my mind around the road ahead, and promised my beautiful wife and children, I will walk by my faith and not my sight. Everybody is the "Champ" until life hits you in the mouth. I have taken a few blows, but my strength is not weak. I was born a winner, and will act like one until my Lord calls me home.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KHALIL

PS: To my Growth Ministries Family, you are my family, and know that is both real and from the heart. I am your brother and servant in all things. Believe that!!!

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.

From Cocaine to Cuisine



Prior to cooking delicious five-star cuisine, celebrity chef Jeff Henderson cooked something else entirely dangerous—cocaine. As a teenager, he had manufactured and sold the drug in his native Los Angeles. By the time he was 19, Henderson was earning as much as \$35,000 per week. He was later apprehended and imprisoned for 10 years after one of his men was caught

carrying a big shipment. It was in prison that Henderson discovered he had a natural flair for cooking and constantly practiced his culinary skills while on kitchen duty.

After he was released early for good behavior, Henderson worked in some of LA's top restaurants before he decided to go for broke in Las Vegas. After experiencing many rejections due to his felonious past, Henderson finally managed to land a job at Caesar's Palace. It was only a matter of time before he finally started getting recognition and awards, including best Las Vegas Chef in 2001. All the fame and success hasn't gotten to Henderson's head and he has continued to share his experiences with at-risk youth to show what they can achieve in life with the right choices.

A Poem

His Name is Jesus, by Debra Smith Plemmons

On Calvary's Mount
In a faraway land,
Stood three crosses:
Two thieves; a sinless Man.

Though He was faultless,
His release was denied.
They cried all the more,
Let Him be crucified.

Standing by the cross,
Family and friends
mourned;
Others only laughed,
Ridiculed, and scorned.

Because of God's love,
He bore all our sin;
He died and was buried,
But He rose again.

There's no other name
Given among men;
He's our salvation,
Our way to Heaven.

His name is Jesus,
Our Savior and King.
For on that hillside,
He gave everything.



Apology: I would like to insert an apology for an insensitive joke that made fun of Jehovah's Witness and Unitarians. Looking back we realize that joke was insensitive. It is never our intent to bash or rudely treat any group.

You don't have to pray before every meal if you never stop eating.



A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little and get your hair cut and we'll talk about it."

After about a month the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair...."

To which his father replied...."Yes, and they WALKED everywhere they went!"

God's Promises

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

GODS WORD
 AGAPE LOVE
 PROMISES
 PEACE
 FAITHFULNESS
 BLESSINGS
 PACTS
 HAPPINESS
 PHYSICAL
 JESUS
 DESERT
 HEALING
 FATHER
 HOLINESS
 FINANCES



Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, GROWTH MINISTRIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48 (NKJV)

It we try to understand this at face value, and measure our ability to be a Christian by this scripture, none of us would probably have the confidence to feel good about ourselves. We all know in our heart that there are many moments and times we just don't feel perfect. So, what do we do? Do we just say forget it? Do we stop trying? Do we just give in to sin because we know that Jesus is the only one without sin according the Bible? It seems no matter how hard we try we sooner or later end up saying or thinking something that is not in line with the will of God. And Jesus did not make it any easier when He came along. The Old Testament said that you should not have sex with your neighbor's wife. Then Jesus, in the New Testament, said that if you even look at her and have lust in your heart it is just as bad as carrying out the act. He changed the game in a big way on many things. And now this thing about being perfect seems like a losing battle before you even start.

So where is the light at the end of the tunnel? How can imperfect people ever become perfect? Why would Jesus ask us to do the impossible? First of all, Jesus would never ask us to do something that was impossible. He would never set us up for failure. He would never fake us out. He loves us too much. Therefore, it is important to not only read the Word of God, but to **study** it. The Greek utterance of the word perfect is "**teleios**", which in Jesus' day meant "finished, complete, pure, or holy." These synonyms relate to maturity; spiritual maturity. When we act irresponsibly as Christians we are *not* acting mature. We are being childlike and selfish and doing the things **we** want to do and the things that make **us** feel good. Jesus set the example for us. He walked the earth and showed us it is possible to live a holy life. He also knows we are not gods so there is a provision that comes with this directive called grace. This is for the times we are caught off guard. I always give the example of stubbing your toe in a dark room with no shoes on and you instinctively say a curse word. For those moments where your ungodliness is unintentional and you are truly sorry you did it, you are forgiven.

So, what did we learn here? Study your word and not just read it. Grow up and stop being selfish. Stop walking into sin while ignoring what is right. And when you do stub your toe in the dark, God is there to forgive you when you say something you don't normally say. You are now well on your way to spiritual maturity (perfection).

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.

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