



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

Father's Day

As we embark upon another
 Father's Day
 Always remember,
 No matter what your earthly Dad is
 or isn't, was or wasn't,
 You have reason to celebrate
 Father's Day
 Because you have a Heavenly
 Father who loves you
 And He loves you unconditionally.
 It matters not who you are, where
 you are, what you've done, or what
 you haven't done.
 He looks past your faults and He
 loves YOU way beyond your worth.

2 Corinthians 6:18

Happy Father's Day!

RIGHT OR LEFT?

Today often brings challenges for Christians to do what is **right**. Things use to be pretty clear for us. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not curse. Do not drink. Do not sleep around. Do not have sex with a person of the same gender. Do not use drugs. Do not lie, etc... But the boundaries of Christianity have started to be redefined by political correctness, being sensitive to people's choices, changes in laws and the popular opinion of social media.

Call me old-fashioned, but I am afraid to give in and compromise. I am going to stick with what the Word of God says when it comes to how I live my life and lead my family. From my understanding, God and His Word is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. When I take a look at scriptures like *1 Corinthians 6:9-10*, I can't help but believe that God means what He says and says what He means. I don't want to be **left** behind.

Will you be **right** or will you be **left** on judgement day?

Lonnie

THE WEDDING FEAST BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ



In *Matthew 22*, Jesus teaches a parable about a wedding feast. In this parable, a king is hosting a wedding for his son. The king sent out invitations, but not everyone was willing to attend. So, the king told his servants to go into the highways and invite all they could find to the wedding. Many attended and the hall was filled with guests. However, when the king came to see the guests, he saw a man who was not wearing a wedding garment.

The king asked the man how he got into the hall without a wedding garment and the man was speechless. The king then told his servants to bind the man, take him away and cast him into outer darkness.

It would appear that the king was very harsh. Where is the compassion in a king who will throw someone out of a wedding feast just because the guest was not wearing the proper attire? How could this king represent God, who we know is full of love and compassion? This seems unfair and extreme.

These are all valid questions and points, until we dig a little deeper. It was the custom in those times for a king to give each guest a wedding garment to attend his son's wedding. It was, after all, a royal wedding and the king would spare no expense. So, this man was offered a new wedding garment, but he refused the garment and instead kept the clothes he wore. The consequences of this decision were that he was bound and thrown into outer darkness.

The king in this story is God and His Son is Jesus. The Bible says that there will be a wedding feast when Jesus returns to take His bride (the church) to be with Him in heaven. We are all invited to be part of this wedding feast. However, just like in this parable, to attend this wedding feast, we will need new garments. The Bible says in *Isaiah 64:6* "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." (New International Version).

For us to enter into this feast, we need to trade our filthy rags in for new wedding garments. We do this by repenting of our sins, accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior and making a decision to live the rest of our lives for Him. If we do this, we will be accepting the free gift of the King's wedding garments and be able to enter into the wedding feast. If we refuse to do this, we will not be able to enter into the wedding feast as the King will not accept anyone without the wedding garment into the feast.

So, we see that the King in this story is full of love and compassion. Through sending His Son to die for our sins, the King is showing His love and compassion by providing the opportunity for everyone to receive new wedding garments. If we choose to not accept these garments, then the result is that we will be cast away from the wedding feast and into outer darkness.

TO EVERY MAN...THE ESSENCE OF GREATNESS BY PASTOR OTIS COBBINS



To every man that has taken time to read the words from my heart, allow me to say thank you.

In your search for light at the end of a long tunnel, hope in an unfavorable situation, and encouragement from the voice of a stranger, I am truly humbled to have this opportunity.

I cannot say that I have ever walked in your shoes. But the common thread that ties all of us together is manhood. And although I have never experienced incarceration, I do know what it feels like to be trapped. I know what it feels like to be unable to walk in the fullness of who God created me to be. I know what it feels like to be bound by the strongholds of guilt. I've gone years convincing myself that the only emotion that matters is anger mainly because it helps me to survive.

It wasn't until I reached a point when I couldn't even help myself that I had a conversation with God. During this conversation, God reminded me that I was created in His image and after His likeness. And everything that I possess that is contrary to His image and likeness is just a ploy to keep me from being great. And when you truly understand just how great God desires you to be, your greatness allows you to tread through the difficulties in life and be great no matter where you are. As long as you have breath in your body, life, and the environment in which you exist, places an assignment upon your greatness. SO, MAKE EVERYDAY COUNT!!! YOU HAVE CHAMPIONSHIP DNA!!

From your fellow inmates...to the prison staff...to your loved ones both near and far, someone needs to hear and experience the greatness of you. It's in you because God placed it in you. But it's up to you to ask God (from time to time) to give life to the greatness inside of you.

Life is a journey, but it also can be a fight. And on those days when it feels as though life has knocked you down and you are about to suffer a TKO...get up, and fight to be the best you that God created you to be, because the canvass is no place for a champion!!

God bless, Pastor Otis

My Own Life BY CHARLES "CJ" JONES, INMATE AT LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY



While growing up, we were told by family members that we should be our own man and live life the way that we want, but in the next breath those same people would tell us to be like so and so whether that be a cousin, friend, friend's brother or even an uncle, because they're so smart, dress well or everyone likes them. At that time, not knowing any better, you try your hardest to be like so and so and it becomes a major struggle because you understand that you can't be that person. All the while you're trying and going all out but just keep getting into trouble because you're trying way too hard to live your life for others.

Later, we mature and come to understand that we are our own man and must be ourselves and live life our way. I say that to say this; when we try to be as others want us to be and try to live life their way, we find ourselves in turmoil because we get so frustrated trying to be that which we are not! Yet we continue to try to please others for the sake of trying to make them feel or look good at a detriment to ourselves, and only when it's too late, we come to the realization that we can't be someone else.

I say this because as a kid growing up, I had several family members telling me I need to be like someone else, you need to be like so and so, you need to be this or that way, you should carry yourself this way and I was trying to do all of those things others wanted me to do. In frustration of not being able nor understanding why I couldn't, I kept getting into trouble and it wasn't until I ended up in prison that I fully understood that you have to be yourself.

By CJ

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. DO YOU HAVE A TESTIMONY? AN INSPIRING STORY? A POEM? SOME WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOUR FELLOW INMATES?

SHARE THEM WITH US BY WRITING TO **P.O. Box 9045, KANSAS CITY, KS, 66112**

ATTN: EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.

PUBLICATION WILL BE PENDING THE REVIEW OF YOUR MATERIAL.

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 Jewel Thief Who Became an Honorary Police Officer

Most parents would have second thoughts leaving their child alone with the hulking and heavily-tattooed Larry Lawton. After all, he used to be one of America's most notorious jewel thieves. At one point, he was on top of the FBI's most wanted list on the eastern seaboard. However, the Lawton of today has entirely focused himself on another mission—to use his own experience in educating and saving young people from a life of crime and imprisonment.

Lawton attributed this incredible turnaround to one moment during his twelve years at federal prison. One of his new-found friends committed suicide in his cell, and Lawton—who was in solitary confinement at the time—felt helpless to save him. After he got out, Lawton established his program, Lawton 911, to help at-risk youth from committing the same mistakes he did. Lawton's sincere efforts have not gone unnoticed—he was recently designated an “honorary police officer” by the local police, the first such ex-convict in the US to receive the honor.

Christian Cartoons

<p>CARRY YOUR BOOKS? A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters</p> <p>© 2007 Michael D. Waters www.joyfultoons.com</p> <p>Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. —1 PETER 5:7 KJV</p>	<p>KNOCK KNOCK A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters</p> <p>© 2007 Michael D. Waters www.joyfultoons.com</p> <p>Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. — MATTHEW 7:7 NIV</p>
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A Poem

A Man After God's Own Heart, by Linda Wolovich

I remember as a child, our dad would be gone
Before the rising of the sun.
He worked as hard as he could, for the sake of
his family,
Until there was no more work to be done.

Our dad was not educated, no diplomas to
show,
But he possessed more skills than a few,
From roofing to plumbing, electrician to
mechanic,
Seemed there was nothing that our dad
couldn't do.

But more than all that, he had such love for the
Lord,
He taught us to do just the same.
Always put Jesus first more than anything else,
Above family, or riches, or fame.

He dedicated his life to serving the Lord,
He shared Christ with all who would hear,
When someone was hurting and just needed
to talk,
He was there with a listening ear.

He had faith to move mountains, he believed
no matter what,
That God always does what is best.
And if things didn't go as he had hoped or
imagined,
I know in Jesus he would confidently rest.

But as time went on, his health started to fail,
His memory began fading each day,
His abilities to witness and bear others burdens,
Were slowly drifting away.

No fault of his own, these changes took place,
We missed seeing the fervor in Dad's eye,
God's plan not revealed, His ways were
unknown,
It was so hard not to question, "Lord, Why?"

Even though he wasn't the man we had
known for so long,
There is one thing we can certainly know,
All the seeds Dad had planted for so many of
years,
Will carry on and continue to grow.

For the love that he showed and the things he
did share,
Doesn't end when the time comes to part,
He will ALWAYS be remembered, His legacy
carries on,
As a man after God's own heart.....

Places in the New Testament		
D	N	Z
U	Q	M
L	J	V
N	X	M
B	I	T
N	Z	E
Y	S	G
S	R	Z
I	J	H
B	X	L
I	K	A
W	V	T
P	I	O
A	B	Y
O	U	K
X	Z	J
H	C	N
M	W	B
L	S	A
D	P	T
E	F	B
P	H	E
S	U	S
J	Q	E
M	O	R
X	H	O
S	M	T
J	C	H
K	P	O
M	I	L
Y	D	R
Q	X	F
O	X	Q
V	O	S
E	S	V
O	F	H
S	V	R
L	Y	D
Q	A	M
L	E	I
I	Y	G
X	F	O
F	O	X
Q	Z	E
S	V	O
B	F	N
D	F	W
H	R	S
S	Y	E
E	P	C
J	A	J
C	P	F
M	A	G
I	I	I
Y	S	M
N	B	E
U	E	D
E	D	W
Q	R	H
T	R	V
A	M	M
P	A	M
H	T	A
E	Y	E
J	N	U
E	A	A
S	E	H
T	R	M
H	R	A
E	T	A
T	E	T
S	A	M
A	D	A
L	G	P
G	L	S
S	Z	A
R	H	Y
H	L	A
H	L	A
O	C	E
T	L	E
M	D	G
I	P	E
M	I	P
P	I	B
O	I	B
O	R	I
N	T	H
W	H	W
H	M	I
L	E	T
U	S	A
P	P	O
J	J	J

Antioch	Damascus	Nazareth
Athens	Ephesus	Pergamum
Bethlehem	Galatia	Philippi
Capernaum	Joppa	Rome
Colossae	Lystra	Sardis
Corinth	Miletus	Thessalonica
		Troas

Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, GROWTH MINISTRIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How was your Father's Day?

Did you get a gift? Did you get some money? Did you get a card? What about a phone call or email wishing you "Happy Father's Day"? Maybe you didn't get anything? Wow! How dare they? What if no one ever fully appreciated what you've done as a father? Does that make you **no longer a father**? Your duties as a father should not be connected to how well your kids shower you. When God chose you to be a father... and he did **choose** you because he could have kept that kid's mom from getting pregnant or kept her from having the baby..., however, when he chose you to be a father he was giving you an **assignment** and **responsibility**. He knew that he had placed or was going to place something special inside you that he wanted you to transfer into that child regardless of how they cherished you. Being a father is not about receiving but about giving. It is very similar to how God fathers us. He gives and gives regardless of how unappreciative we are. It is a job that he loves to carry out. Be like God and do your part just like He does for you, even when you don't always appreciate Him.

If you need a little help seeing what that looks like, then read the story of the Prodigal Son. Now that is a father that never gave up on being a father even when his son was everything but perfect. [Luke 15:20-24](#)

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