

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

Peace

*It does not mean to be in a place
Where there is no noise,
Trouble,
Or hard work.
It means to be in the midst of those
things
And still be calm in your heart.*

*Be still and know that He is
God...Psalms 46:10*

*It's our continued prayer that
The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon
you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon
you,
And give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

Be Blessed!

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 PRISON TO POETRY

Reginald Dwayne Betts is an American poet, memoirist, and teacher. Reginald was a classic case of a genius gone awry. Although he was an especially gifted student in his youth, his sass made him difficult to teach, and it was only when teachers gave him books to read that Betts would calm down. For all his smarts, Betts made a pretty dumb error at the age of 16 when he and a friend robbed a man and made off with his car. He was caught, tried as an adult, and sentenced to nine years in prison, where he witnessed the horrors that juvenile prisoners experience mixed in with hardened adult criminals.

To keep his sanity, Betts read almost constantly. He became fixated on poetry when someone slipped him a copy of Dudley Randall's *The Black Poets*. After he got out, Betts completed his studies and became an active voice in reforming the juvenile justice system. He also established a reading club for the local young men in his area, which he uses to engender in them a love for reading and poetry.

THE PERFECT GUIDE FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD – PART 1 BY DORIS R. MOORE



Recently, as I was preparing to go on a road trip with my husband, I used a computer program called MapQuest to locate possible routes to our destination. I reviewed each route, carefully weighing the pros and cons before choosing the best one to take. One of the routes was faster than the other, one allowed us to travel a smoother less treacherous drive, while another one would give us better highway mileage; it included toll roads that would cost more and take us further out of the way. MapQuest was a great resource in helping us to plan our road trip, see the entire trip from a birds-eye view and make better decisions about the trip ahead.

As we were driving to our destination and following the map as requested, I noticed that when we missed a turn, a voice would say, “Recalculating” and we were automatically re-routed back to our pre-planned route. Eventually, we arrived safely at our destination, ready to enjoy our time together.

Wouldn't it be nice if life's journey had something like a MapQuest guide; an app that we could use to see the outcomes of our life's decisions before they even occurred? What if we had a resource that could help us live the best life imaginable and help us maneuver life's challenges?

Unfortunately, there is no MapQuest to help us navigate real-life journeys but let me introduce you to someone and something even better than MapQuest. I'd like to introduce you to my friend; Jesus and the Word of God called the Bible! He has already given us the perfect guide to help us through this earthly journey. *Psalms 119:105* says, “My word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your pathways.” This means that as we walk through life there will be dark days and treacherous journeys where we can't find our way. Jesus will show us the way and light up our path so we won't get lost. When we stray from our designated path, Jesus is also there to help us “recalculate” or refocus and get back on track. I encourage you to not just look at your past missteps or the decisions that have landed you in negative situations or feeling lost, but look forward to your future and ask Jesus, the Master Planner, to be your guide.

THE PERFECT GUIDE FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD – PART 2

Believe it or not, that's exactly what God provides through His Word, the Holy Bible. Some people use the acronym B.I.B.L.E. to mean, "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth." Wow! Now that's a guide that provides direction so we'll never get lost, that is if we read, trust and obey what He says. The Bible has been given to us to use as a manual of how to live on Earth, utilizing the principles of Christ. Throughout the Bible, Jesus used parables or stories to teach us life's lessons. Many mirror our various circumstances and others are examples of how to follow the teachings of Christ.

The Bible is a road map to help us on life's journey. *Proverbs 3:5-6* says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Let Jesus lead you today and from this point on, look to Him for direction and guidance. *Romans 8:14* says, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Finally, as you embark upon life's journey, remember to let the Lord give you directions, trust and obey God's Word which is the Bible and walk upright before the Lord. *Psalms 37:23* says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way." This kind of reminds me of an old church song that I used to hear my parents sing years ago... it still rings true today:

Lead me; guide me along the way,
Lord, if you don't lead me, I will stray,
Lord, let me walk each day with you,
Lead me oh Lord, lead me.



CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY VS CHAMPIONSHIP CROWN BY BROTHER ROBERT MINTON



In sports and in society, people are always trying to be like high paid athletes like Michael Jordan, LeBron James, and celebrities Beyoncé, Janet Jackson and other heroes or their own mental version of what greatness looks like. These people play and perform for their own glory, or that of a team or city. They compete for championship trophies or awards. They have parades, ceremonies, and award shows to honor their accomplishments. They go into the Hall of Fame where you can pay money to see their moment in time. Every season, every year, they start over looking for that seasonal victory (Trophy).

Now, I want to tell you about the Championship Crown. It was made of thorns and branches twisted together. It has no earthly value. It didn't require physical exercise. Its cost was obedience, sacrifice, blood, sweat, and tears. His victory is everlasting to everlasting. His Fans are the Angels in Heaven and all creation. The cost to see Him is Faith and Repentance. There is nobody compared to Him.

We too can wear this Championship Crown. One writer wrote, "One day I must put off this mortal body of corruption and put on Immortality, therefore, there is laid up for me 'a Crown of Righteousness' which the Lord shall give unto those who are Faithful and Obedient".

Which crown do you strive for? Men, Fathers, Husbands, let's set our sights on the Heavenly Crown, being the head, leader, provider, protector, of our families in Word and in Spirit and Truth.

"Why should a man try to compete with desperate measures in desperate enterprises?"
One of my favorite poems:

*"If a man doesn't keep pace with his companion,
maybe he hears the beat of a different drummer.
Let him step to the music in which he hears,
however measured or far away".*

by Henry David Thoreau

Find your beat. Find your crown.

JESUS in Every Book of the Bible (Author Unknown)

- In Genesis, Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman.
- In Exodus, He is the Passover lamb.
- In Leviticus, He is our high priest.
- In Numbers, He is the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.
- In Deuteronomy, He is the prophet like unto Moses.
- In Joshua, He is the captain of our salvation.
- In Judges, He is our judge and lawgiver.
- In Ruth, He is our kinsman redeemer.
- In 1st and 2nd Samuel, He is our trusted prophet.
- In Kings and Chronicles, He is our reigning king.
- In Ezra, He is the rebuildier of the broken-down walls of human life.
- In Esther, He is our Mordecai.
- In Job, He is our ever-living redeemer.
- In Psalms, He is our shepherd.
- In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, He is our wisdom.
- In the Song of Solomon, He is the loving bridegroom.
- In Isaiah, He is the prince of peace.
- In Jeremiah, He is the righteous branch.
- In Lamentations, He is our weeping prophet.
- In Ezekiel, He is the wonderful four-faced man.
- In Daniel, He is the fourth man in life's "fiery furnace."
- In Hosea, He is the faithful husband, forever married to the backslider.
- In Joel, He is the baptizer with the Holy Ghost and fire.
- In Amos, He is our burden-bearer.
- In Obadiah, He is the One mighty to save.
- In Jonah, He is our great foreign missionary.
- In Micah, He is the messenger of beautiful feet.
- In Nahum, He is the avenger of God's elect.
- In Habakkuk, He is God's evangelist, crying, "revive thy work in the midst of the years."
- In Zephaniah, He is our Savior.
- In Haggai, He is the restorer of God's lost heritage.
- In Zechariah, He is the fountain opened up in the house of David for sin and uncleanness.
- In Malachi, He is the Sun of Righteousness, rising with healing in His wings.
- In Matthew, He is King of the Jews.
- In Mark, He is the Servant.
- In Luke, He is the Son of Man, feeling what we feel.
- In John, He is the Son of God.
- In Acts, He is the Savior of the world.
- In Romans, He is the righteousness of God.
- In I Corinthians, He is the Rock that followed Israel.
- In II Corinthians, He is the Triumphant One, giving victory.
- In Galatians, He is our liberty; He sets us free.
- In Ephesians, He is Head of the Church.
- In Philippians, He is our joy.
- In Colossians, He is our completeness.
- In 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, He is our hope.
- In I Timothy, He is our faith.
- In II Timothy, He is our stability.
- In Philemon, He is our Benefactor.
- In Titus, He is truth.
- In Hebrews, He is our perfection.
- In James, He is the Power behind our faith.
- In I Peter, He is our example.
- In II Peter, He is our purity.
- In I John, He is our life.
- In II John, He is our pattern.
- In III John, He is our motivation.
- In Jude, He is the foundation of our faith.
- In Revelation, He is our coming King.



Just for Laughs



Powerful Verse

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening of church services when she was startled by an intruder. She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled, "Stop! Acts 2:38!" (Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven...) The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done. As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture to you." "Scripture?" replied the burglar. "She said she had an Ax and Two 38's!"

Walk on Water

All his life George from Cape Breton had heard stories of an amazing family tradition. It seems that his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been able to walk on water on their 21st birthday. On that day, they'd walk across the lake to the boat club for their birthday cake. So, when George's 21st birthday came around, he and his pal Corky took a boat out to the middle of the lake. George stepped out of the boat and nearly drowned! Corky just managed to pull him to safety. Furious and confused, George went to see his grandmother. "Grandma, it's my 21st birthday, so why can't I walk across the lake like my father, his father, and his father before him?" Granny shook her head in disgust, looked into George's eyes and said, "Because your father, grandfather and great grandfather were born in January. You were born in July." (*Get it? The lake is frozen in January*)

Hereafter

The Pastor came to visit the other day. He said that at my advanced age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do it all the time. No matter where I am - in the living room, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I am always asking myself: Now, what am I here after?"

Underage

A little child in church for the first time watched as the ushers passed the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, the youngster piped up so that everyone could hear: "Don't pay for me Daddy, I'm under five."

Bible Wordsearch

Fit the words in the list into the diagram below reading forward, backward, up, down, diagonally, always in a straight line.

Luke 14:15-30

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

Parables of the Wedding and the Tower

Puzzle #163

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| ALLEYS | GREAT |
| ANGRY | GUESTS |
| BANQUET | HATE |
| BLESSED | HEARD |
| BLIND | HOUSE |
| BRING | INVITED |
| BROTHERS | JESUS |
| CERTAIN | JUST |
| CHILDREN | KINGDOM |
| COST | LAME |
| COUNTRY | LANES |
| CRIPPLED | MASTER |
| CROSS | MONEY |
| CROWDS | ORDERED |
| DISCIPLE | OWNER |
| EAT | OXEN |
| ESTIMATE | POOR |
| EXCUSES | READY |
| FATHER | ROADS |
| FEAST | SISTERS |
| FIELD | STREETS |
| FINISH | TABLE |
| FOLLOW | TASTE |
| GOD | TOWER |

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Psalm 30

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

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Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROWTH MINISTRIES INC

Who **are** you?

The easiest answer to that question would be to tell us your name, or to tell us what you do, or tell us who your parents are. Your earthly identity came after you were conceived so its power is earthly. But for those of us that believe in Jesus, God says we are much more. The identity He has for us was given to us before we were formed in our mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). God tells us that we are "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). He says that we are "the lenders and not the borrowers" (Deuteronomy 28:12-13). God says you are "healers of the sick" (Matthew 10:8). By His Word you are a "New Creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I just wanted to close by saying that when you know who you really are, the world looks so much different. You are capable of doing so much more. We suddenly realize that we have been holding ourselves back by only living up to our earthly identity and not our God-given identity.

Be who you were created to be.

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 4375, Olathe, KS 66063

WE HAVE MOVED