

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

More Than a Conqueror

Today will be a great day!
And no one can change that
Regardless of what comes your way!

Declare right now that you are the Head
And not the Tail!

You are Above and not Beneath!
You are A Victor-Not a Victim!
You are the Lender and not the
Borrower!

You are Blessed, Healthy, Wealthy,
Healed

And set free from Debt, Worry, Sickness,
Injustices

Or anything else that may be hindering
you today!

Declare that you will see your situation as
how you want it to be
And not what it is!

**YOU ARE MORE THAN A CONQUEROR
THROUGH HIM WHO LOVES YOU!**
Romans 8:31-39



Welcome to our 24th Edition of **The Growth Journal**.

This month marks the completion of our 2nd year of issuing this newsletter. So, this is a celebratory edition. Most of the content will be *from* inmates *to* inmates. We have recently received several articles from brothers incarcerated, so we thought it fitting that they be highlighted in our special issue.

We look forward to publishing many more editions of this newsletter allowing us to share words of inspiration, encouragement, deliverance and even conviction. I personally pray over every edition before it is released. Your kind letters that come to us after each publication is evidence that God’s purpose is being carried out in this small and humble mission.

I also want to give a “shout out” to inmate Garnet Tolen who contributed to the starting and naming of this newsletter. He is featured in our lead article this month.

Lonnie Johnson
Executive Director of Growth Ministries

GOLD AND SILVER IN OUR PRISONS



It was late, and I was tired, wanting to go to sleep, but God wanted to talk; it was about midnight, but it dawned on me that God does not sleep. His question made me restless.

"Gamet, where on Earth does man keep his most priceless treasures and valuables?" I said, "Lord, usually these treasures, like gold, silver, diamonds, and precious jewels are kept locked somewhere out of sight, usually with guards and security to keep them under lock and key." God Spoke, "Like man, My most valuable treasures on Earth are also locked up." I saw Jesus standing in front of seemingly thousands of prisons and jails. The Lord said, "These have almost been destroyed by the enemy, but these souls have the greatest potential to be used, and to bring forth glory to My name. Tell My people, I am going this hour to the prisons to activate the gifts and callings that lie dormant in these lives that were given before the foundation of the Earth. Out from these walls will come forth a Spiritual Army that will have power to literally kick down the gates of Hell and overcome satanic powers that are holding many of My people bound in My own house."

"Tell my people that great treasures are behind these walls, in these forgotten vessels. My people must come forth and touch these lives, for a mighty anointing will be unleashed upon them for future victory in My Kingdom. They must be restored."

Then I saw the Lord step up to the prison doors with a key. One key fit every lock and the gates began to open. I then heard and saw great explosions which sounded like dynamite going off behind the walls. It sounded like all-out spiritual warfare. Jesus turned and said, "Tell My people to go in now and pick up the spoil and rescue them." Jesus then began walking in and touching inmates who were thronging Him. Many, having been touched, instantly began to have a golden glow come over them. God spoke to me, "There's the gold!" Others had a silver glow around them, God said, "There's the silver!"

Like slow motion they began to grow into what appeared to be giant knights in armor - like warriors. They had on the entire armor of God and every piece was solid and pure gold! Even golden shields! When I saw the golden shields, I heard God say to these warriors, "Now go and take what Satan has taught you and use it against him. Go pull down the strongholds coming against My Church." The spiritual giants then started stepping over the prison walls with no one to resist them, and they went immediately to the very front line of the battle with the enemy. I saw them walk right past the church, and big-name ministers, known for their power with God, were surpassed by the giant warriors like David going after Goliath! They crossed the enemy's line and started delivering many of God's people from the clutches of Satan while demons trembled and fled out of sight at their presence. No one, not even the church, seemed to know who these spiritual giants were or where they came from. All you could see was the armor, the golden armor of God, from head to foot, and shields of gold were there. The shields were restored to God's house and there was a great victory and rejoicing.

In closing the Lord said, "If My people want to know where they are needed, tell them they are needed in the streets, the hospitals, the missions, the prisons. When they come they will find Me and the next move of My spirit and they will be judged by My Word in Matthew 25:42".

The story "Gold and Silver in our Prisons" was written by an unknown author, however I reoffer this to those who are incarcerated physically, mentally, and spiritually to remind them that our Lord and Savior works in prisons, too!! For those who are actually in a physical "lock-up center" or a correctional institution, we cannot believe that we are discarded because we may have committed sins that sent us to the pen. We serve a Living-God, who forgives and who resurrects His people from anywhere they are found.

To my brothas and sistas who are incarcerated, know that God is protecting, preserving, and preparing you for a great day!! Keep on your suit of armor and be used by God.

**Garnet Tolen
Lansing Correctional Facility**

THE GREATEST IS LOVE

LOVE IS VERY PATIENT AND KIND, NEVER JEALOUS OR HATEFUL, NEVER BOASTFUL NOR PROUD AND NEVER NAUGHTY, SELFISH OR RUDE.

LOVE DOES NOT DEMAND ITS OWN WAY, IT'S NOT IRRITABLE OR TOUCHY, IT DOESN'T HOLD GRUDGES AND WILL HARDLY NOTICE WHEN OTHERS DO IT WRONG. IT IS NEVER GLAD ABOUT INJUSTICE BUT REJOICES WHENEVER TRUTH IS TRIUMPH.

IF YOU "LOVE" SOMEONE YOU'LL BE LOYAL TO THEM NO MATTER WHAT THE COST, YOU'LL ALWAYS BELIVE IN THE BEST THAT IS IN THEM, AND YOU WILL ALWAYS STAND BY THEM.

BUT REMEMBER THIS: ALL SPECIAL GIFTS AND POWERS OF MAN COME TO AN END AT SOME POINT, BUT LOVE WILL GO ON FOREVER BECAUSE IT'S FROM "GOD"

Charles E. Jones
Lansing Correctional Facility

FULL DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD

As the Lord encourages us, He places within us that which can be an encouragement to others. There must be a willingness, a ready mind, and a yielding to the mind of the Spirit. Because if there isn't, the child of God has no place in God's great plan except in "Humility". Read 1 Peter 5:5-6. Be encouraged my brothers and all sisters as well.

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,
Steven A. Clark
Norton Correctional Facility

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dear G.M.I. Family and Friends:

Before I begin, I want to give thanks to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as well as giving praise and glory to our Heavenly Father.

In celebration, we sometimes get caught up in the festivities instead of the reason for the festival. Our selfishness will let us attend a party and enjoy ourselves more than the person the party was intended for.

Thank you, Lonnie Johnson and the Growth Ministries Family! And HAPPY TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY!! May God Bless G.M.I. with many more anniversaries to celebrate.

Psalm 118:24 "This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." In the scripture it says, "we will rejoice". Growth Ministries isn't something that we should take for granted. When I was incarcerated I received more newsletters and support from G.M.I. than I received from family or friends. And I have continued to receive newsletters and encouragement since I have been released from prison. They reassure me of the realities of spiritual warfare and the everyday deliverance that takes place in the renewing and strengthening of the mind.

Thanks again and God bless you Growth Ministries Inc.

Curtis Wooten II
Recently Released, KS DOC

RESPONSIBILITIES (INMATE NAME UNKNOWN AT THE MOMENT)



I can't talk for others, but I can talk for myself, so when you read this it's about me, not others. While in prison, I have had to face many demons from my past life in order to get to where I am presently. Where is that you might ask. Well, let me tell you some things about myself; I once was a person who had to admit to himself that I didn't like that man in the mirror, because of what I was, and it wasn't nice by any means of the word. I, like just about everyone else in prison, was blaming others for my being in prison. At the same time, I use to wonder how could I have been responsible for the taking of a life.

Well, in order to figure that one out, I had to take a trip down memory lane and boy it was not fun, far from it, and it was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Having been molested by a female babysitter at a very early age and again by someone from the Big Brother/Big Sister program, was part of the reasons I committed my crime(s). Nevertheless, at that time, I didn't even know and by not knowing how to tell my people that it had happened to me contributed to my getting in trouble. That was one of the reasons I blamed others for my being in prison. Was what happened to me justification for me to blame others? Yes, they were the blame for what they did to me, but I didn't understand that I was the blame for what landed me in prison!

I was doing all the wrong things in trying to tell people that something was wrong with me, even though at the time I didn't know something was wrong with me. It sounds crazy but it's a fact. Even now there are kids out there doing some of the same things I was doing to get attention because they are hurting inside and don't know how to tell people. Once I started to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCEPT ACCOUNTABILITY for my action(s) then and only then did I start to make headway on getting myself together.

People think they know what is going on with those of us that come to prison and that includes doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists, who so often try to judge us as well as to put labels on us for what we've done to end up in here. However, they don't stop to look at what the underlying cause is of why we did what we did to end up in here. Some don't even care. And at times, we (inmates) tend to lash out at those who wish to judge us and put us down because we feel that's our only way of getting Society or others to hear us. But now I know that that's not the answer. To get to the answer we must first deal with all the baggage from our past, to help better ourselves so that we can move forward in trying to heal from that which was done to us.

Part of getting better was to take responsibility and accept accountability for what I did that put me in prison. Once I was able to do that and move past the hurts of my past, things got easier in order for me to move ahead in my healing process. People still judge me for what I've done, and will continue to do so nonetheless.

Taking responsibility for our actions is one of the real attributes of being a man and in my opinion, the real attributes of a man are:

1. To take responsibility and accept accountability for your actions, no matter what those actions may be.
2. To be there for your kids no matter what the situation is. You and the mother may not get along, but you can still be there for your kids.
3. Be the man that you say you are by being able to admit your faults!
4. Know when to be the bigger person and walk away.

If we spend as much time worrying about ourselves, and trying to get our lives in order, we won't have the time to worry about the next man's troubles and that makes our responsibilities a lot clearer to us.

Be the man that you think the other man is supposed to be by being able to RESPECT THAT MAN IN THE MIRROR!!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN, TO ME, TO SERVE CHRIST?

Inmate Ormond Wimberly of Lansing Correctional Facility asked some of his brothers from BIB the above question and here are their answers:

To serve Christ, I believe, is to walk as Christ did; forgiving, be loving and kind in everything we do. When we see others hurting or struggling, reach down and help them up. Let them know someone loves and cares for them. Let them know they have a friend in Jesus. It is written in John 15:13, "*Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" Jesus did this at the cross so that we could have everlasting life.

Robert Wren

It is ironic that I was asked, "What does it mean to serve Jesus Christ? It means **life** at its fullest, when you apply His Word and teaching to your **life**. It means redemption and reconciliation. It means to open your heart to something bigger than yourself. To serve Jesus is to wake up with an advocate in the morning, a Savior when I sleep. To serve Jesus is to follow a true leader and His example. To serve Jesus is to have eternal **life**. That is what it means to me to serve Jesus Christ.

Isaac Williams

I believe to serve Christ; it is a daily walk. A walk of loving our brothers as ourselves. Whether that brother be in church, work, our families, friend circles or social outings. But to truly serve Christ, it is a daily walk of love and service. That is how we share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Caleb Chrisman

From my own personal experience, with walking with Christ, I've come to realize that I must wake up and die daily. By being a servant to others, you are serving Christ, not materialistically, but spiritually. Christ came so that we may have life and live it abundantly. By sharing with others what God has done for me and what chains of bondage have been broken due to my love for Christ, I can reach people in their darkest hours. I can help shed light that was shed for me. I truly believe that if we love, our hearts will respond and reflect the love of God. If we take care of God's business, He will take care of ours. May the love of God captivate your mind, body, and spirit.

Travis Brandt

Christ Jesus, for me, is living not only for myself, but living for others, being a light in a dark place. It's all about living out love, forgiveness, and mercy. The Word of God is my lifeline. I know that outside of Him I cannot truly produce on a righteous level. He is my Savior, my provider, my healer. That solid foundation of love I can depend on. Christ Jesus is my strength and my strong tower in times of trouble, and at the same time, He's my peace that surpasses all understanding. The JOY of the Lord is my strength. Who I am and who I will become lies all in the shed blood of my Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Stanley Cason

WORD SEARCH
OLD TESTAMENT PLACES

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

Eden
Havilah
Ethiopia
Ur
Babylon
Luz
Bethel
Assyria
Kadesh
Damascus

Sidon
Tyre
Megiddo
Shechem
Dor
Joppa
Jericho
Jerusalem
Hebron
Gaza

Beersheba
Sinai
Egypt
Edom
Moab
Israel
Judah
Bozrah

JOKES OF THE MONTH

What Would Jesus Drive?

Q: Did you know that they had automobiles in Jesus' time?

A: Yes, the Bible says that the disciples were all of one Accord.

God's Creation

In the beginning, God created the earth and rested.

Then God created Man and rested.

Then God created Woman.

Since then, neither God nor Man has rested.

Who Makes the Coffee??

A married couple were arguing who is making the coffee, the wife said that in the Bible it says that men should make the coffee and the husband asked her where it said that. The wife opened the Bible and said: "Right here in HEBREWS!"

A Woman at the Post Office

A Woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards.

"What Denomination?" Asked the clerk.

"Oh, my goodness! Have we come to this?" said the woman.

"Well give me 50 Baptist and 50 Catholic!"

Going Down!!

As the storm raged, the captain realized his ship was sinking fast. He called out, "Anyone here know how to pray?" One man stepped forward. "Aye, Captain, I know how to pray." "Good," said the captain, "you pray while the rest of us put on our life jackets - we're one short."

Donation

Father O'Malley answers the phone. "Hello, is this Father O'Malley?"

"It is"

"This is the IRS. Can you help us?"

"I can"

"Do you know a Ted Houlihan?"

"I do"

"Is he a member of your congregation?"

"He is"

"Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?"

"He will".

Little Angel!

Little Johnny's new baby brother was screaming up a storm.

Johnny asked his mom, "Where'd he come from?"

"He came from heaven, Johnny."

Johnny responded: "Wow! I can see why they threw him out!"

How to Get to Heaven?

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?"

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead!"

Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROWTH MINISTRIES INC

I Want to Die Empty

I recently had the opportunity to hear an old sermon by Myles Monroe called "Die Empty". He starts the sermon talking about a drive he was taking. On his way, he passed a graveyard. As he passed the cemetery he had a revelation that made him realize that graveyards are some of the wealthiest places on earth. He went on to say that laying in the cemetery were books that have never been written, songs that have never been recorded, businesses that have never been started and sermons that have never been preached to name a few things. The reason the cemeteries are so rich with wealth is because many of us **never** tap into our true potential. We go through life barely being who God created us to be.

So, my questions to you are this? What are **you** taking to the graveyard with you? What will you deny the world of experiencing? What are you hiding inside that God has given you that you will never release? Will no one ever hear the songs you have in your heart? Will a group of young people never benefit from your story and the mistakes you have made? Will your community never have a chance to prosper from the teaching of your business savvy?

I have made up my mind that the graveyard will **NOT** get rich from my untapped potential. I am going to do my best to empty out everything God has placed inside of me. Like Myles Munroe, I don't want to die old, **I want to die empty.**

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