

# JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration, and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison



JANUARY 2026

Dear Mentor,

It was close to the time I expected my wife Hendrina to be home from visiting her mother when my phone started ringing and her name popped up on the screen. When I answered, she was distraught and crying. A car had run a stop sign at high speed and nearly hit her. Through tears, she told me that just moments earlier, she had a strong sense she needed to slow down as she approached the intersection. That small decision may have saved her from a devastating crash.

Slowing down may have saved Hendrina's life. Slowing down in our daily lives may not feel as dramatic, but God often guides us through quiet leadings rather than loud commands.

*"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:21).*

Writing *Just for Mentors* is a time when I slow down. I spend time studying, reflecting, and asking others for input as I seek the right words to share with you. I rely on the Holy Spirit to guide me (John 16:13), to speak through Scripture (2 Timothy 3:14–17), and to speak through the voices of godly people around me. I know many of you approach your letters to students in the same way!

When we slow down and quiet our minds, we give ourselves space to hear that still, small voice behind us.

*"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).*

As you consider what to share with your student, remember: slowing down is not a sign of weakness, despite what the world may say. In fact, slowing down—being still—brings strength (Exodus 14:14). It allows us to breathe, reflect, and listen for God's voice. Encourage your student to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance before each lesson and to write down on their lesson pages thoughts that arise.

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).*

To us, Hendrina's experience is a powerful reminder of how the Holy Spirit often speaks in gentle, quiet ways. Her decision to slow down wasn't just caution—it was divine protection.

May you find peace and clarity as you slow down and listen to the Holy Spirit's prompting while you write words of encouragement and hope to your student.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery

Director of Church Engagement

**Have a question?** You can contact the mentor support team at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) or 800-668-2450.

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# NEWS & NOTES

## January Mentor Community Gathering

This month, Douglas Cupery, Director of Church Engagement, will join us to share on the topic of identity through storytelling. In Doug's book, *I See You: Remembering the Incarcerated Through a Living Letter*, we see how impactful our words about others—and the use of labels—can be on a person's identity.

Douglas joined Crossroads in 2017 and serves as the Director of Church Engagement. Since his release from prison, he has served as a church pastor and led both prison in-reach and post-incarceration ministries. He also serves on the advisory board of the Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. Douglas and his wife, Hendrina, have two grown children and two grandchildren.



REGISTER

If you have specific questions about this topic, please send them in advance to [GatheringsQA@cpministries.org](mailto:GatheringsQA@cpministries.org).

Date: Tuesday, January 20, at 3:00 p.m. (ET)

Open your phone's camera to scan the QR code and register online.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** Can I include any extra tracts, pamphlets, greeting cards, etc., when I return a lesson to a student?

**A.** Please include only the student's lesson and your full-page letter. We ask that you do not include extra materials to ensure the packet is not rejected by the prison mailroom. You may write information, quotes, verses, or poems from other materials in your letter to the student.

**Q.** What should I do if my mentor portal account shows that I should have received a lesson, but I never received it?

**A.** Please wait three to four weeks before notifying Crossroads that you have not received a lesson appearing on your mentor portal account. Often, lessons that seem to be lost will arrive in the mail later.

**Q.** How do I report student progress to Crossroads?

**A.** There are three different ways to submit your reports. You can choose to do any of the following:

- Use the online Crossroads mentor portal
- Send an email to [reports@cpministries.org](mailto:reports@cpministries.org)
- Call (800) 668-2450 and follow the prompts