



**MASTERLIFE  
MINISTRY,  
INC  
NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2019**

MASTERING LIFE IN CHRIST

# Merry Christmas!

We hope you have enjoyed the newsletters as much as we have. Being able to follow your progress has been very uplifting to everyone at MasterLife Ministry, as well as the many brothers and sisters on our mailing list. We have our web page started at [www.MasterLife-Ministry.org](http://www.MasterLife-Ministry.org), we encourage you to inform your family and church to read our past newsletters, they are on the web site.

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I know I say this each time I've written but I can't say enough how blessed I am by the testimonies and insights. It is truly motivation to keep looking up and moving forward in Christ. Knowing God can change the hearts of those in charge and good can and will come!

I know God does work all things together for good and for His glory to those who love Him, and I love Him! With that being said I won't go into a lot of detail, I would just like everyone to pray for me and the condition of my heart. I have been very wronged and my opportunity for transition taken. I trust God's lead and I know He will work this for good, I need strength and discernment and I know that there is power in numbers. The Jericho wall

fell as they shouted together, Jesus sent His disciples out in two's. events happen and we realize that God didn't send us out alone, we have each other. There is no separation in the spirit realm, we are one body, the Body of Christ! Thank God! So, I'm asking the body to pray, I'm also getting released in 6 months and have a lot to deal with. I appreciate your prayers, can't wait for my next newsletter, they lift my spirits when things are heavy.

God bless you, Regina Bridges

Dear Family, Hi, I wanted to share a little of what God showed me with my family in Christ. I just sent that letter above requesting prayer with a heavy heart. Today, that heaviness is gone! I read what Brother Tim wrote and Brother Williams testimony and it helped put my focus back where it truly needed to be, and that is on what You are leading me to do Lord, who do I need to point to You?

I too lost everything I had gained and saved for years when I got here to NCCIW. I have in

this very hot 😊 and dark place watched God shine. I've had the opportunity to witness to these young ladies who have lost their sense of value and identity. I'm in a dorm

instead of open quad (thank God 😊 ) with Crv and Prv ladies that only have 30-90 days and it gets hard and crazy, but God has

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opened doors for me to witness one on one to a few and for that I am grateful!

I want to share a short testimony and a poem with you all. I was on work release, thriving and doing everything I could to remain infraction free so I could get home leave. I had one write-up in 14 years. Then one day, another lady and I were pulled from our job. Needless to say, I walked around very bitter, with a heart of unforgiveness, all I could see was that I had lost behind the lies and betrayal. Today, Saturday 9-21-19 I decided to let go of that so that God can look on my heart and see mercy without judgement. As soon as I made that decision, **I felt a weight come off my shoulders and my joy returned.** It is easy to feed anger, and if you are a leader, people will contribute to your view of being wronged which feed unforgiveness, bitterness, and negativity! That's when you have to get alone with God and if that means on your bunk at night or early in the morning, you do what you got to do to refocus. We are lights to those around us and if we don't show them a better way the world will swallow them up. Showing them a better way is done by our actions not our lip service! 😊 when we don't realize that people are watching us, may they find no malice in us. All it takes is genuine love, care, and concern, that's it! I thank God for your testimonies and words of encouragement, it means a lot to see others going through the same stuff and see how God helped them through.

Regina Bridges, NCCIW

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## Pamlico

We have completed 14 weeks of discipleship study to conclude the first MasterLife here at Pamlico. It has been an awesome experience that has honored our Lord and has glorified the Father. The men who participated in this group were all faithful, attentive, worked hard to memorize scripture, taking notes as went along, and they truly desired to grow and learn what it means to be a disciple. We all know each other better as a result, but more importantly, we all know Jesus better – who He is, what He did, and how we are to follow Him in a lasting relationship based on love, humility, gratitude and obedience. Enclosed are the testimonies of these men who would like everyone to know that Jesus Christ has done for them through the MasterLife discipleship program. I would like to ask that all the brothers across the State who read these testimonies, pray for these men, their families, and their continued development in

the Lord. Thank you all, in Christ, for everything. God bless my brothers-in-Christ behind these walls.

A special shout-out to Benoy, DJ, Sergio, Danny Brook, Slade Hicks, Cecil Saunders, Justin Shoemake, Greg Ross, Jason Kinnison, Nick, Doug L, KB, Bud, and the many more that God has blessed me to meet over the years in MasterLife groups at Alexander. Avery Mitchell, and now Pamlico. We need each other on this mission field. Prayer, encouragement, fellowship, and godly counsel. Thank you to everyone who has contributed past, present, and future. May 2020 reflect more growth in Christ, and continued service to our King (1 Corinthians 15:58).

**In Christ, Brian Crouch "Fish", Pamlico, MasterLife Group Leader**

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MasterLife has opened a new area within me that always existed but lay dormant due to my surroundings. MasterLife showed no matter what my hardships are **God loves me.** Brian C (Fish) has been a big help and supporter of every member, his method of teaching and understanding, plus remembering verses was very simple and fun for everyone. I would encourage anyone to attend, you will not regret your decision.

Brian C has supplied with knowledge (weapons of warfare) to strive for the best. I had a wonderful time, I hope the next group will too, and to conclude our group, Brian is giving a party to show us his appreciation for the time we spent together, **we became a family with lasting memories.**

Thank you, Brian C, for taking the time to teach all of us about the love of God.

Charles Dickerson, Pamlico

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When I was asked to be a part of MasterLife, it felt great that he would consider me to be part of the group. So, I decided that even though I wasn't perfect, but was at least attempting to live right, I would see what I could get out of it. While doing so, I've had other guys ask me questions about it, so not only did this help me, but we helped others that saw us, even if they weren't a part of the group. One of the most important things that I learned for me was the "Priority of Prayer". Having to learn how to pray, and asking for things, even though He knows already. But to quote His Word, and remember His promises, as well as remind Him them. I got so much more and learned so much that I didn't know.

POEM

By Regina Bridges

Words

How do we use them

How often do we misuse them

Words

They can cause a lot of hurt

They can inflict pain undeserved

Words

Useless, fruitless, abusive

Words

They can lift up and encourage

They can give strength and motivation

Words

How do you use your

Words?

I would recommend MasterLife for those that's trying to have a relationship with God, because you will become closer, your eyes will open to new things that you heard about, but not experience. Do it for yourself to learn about Christ in you.

Last, I would like to thank you guys for your support, and making learning more fun by adding the trivia, and other short-cuts to learning. Thanks to Fish, and for allowing me to be a part of the group, I had fun, I enjoyed myself, and my life is still changing!

**Thanks for the support, sincerely, Davis Lemance, Pamlico**

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My name is DeLandré Baldwin, and I was introduced to MasterLife by brother Brian Crouch. For me MasterLife helped me re-freshen on memorizing my Bible verses, becoming more familiar with passages of the Bible that direct me to a better relationship with God, and what He has done for me. This is an experience that will be truly helpful to me in my future when it comes to giving my loved one's the many gifts of knowledge that I received, as well as guy's that I encounter along this journey of mine. There are so many different Bible verses that solidify God's plan that He has for us, and it is clear, if we abide in His words and teachings that He will always be here for us, to guide us. I truly appreciate

the different lessons that I've learned and would recommend this program to anyone who is seeking guidance and understanding, to be able to have a better relationship with Christ.

**DeLandré Baldwin, Pamlico**

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I am very thankful for the MasterLife program. When Brian "Fish" Crouch came to me to join this, I was thinking it would be as our other Bible studies. I am not good at retaining scriptures to memory and didn't think it mattered. As we all learned to memorize these scriptures, I realized God was using me differently now. He brought these verses to mind during conversations with others to talk and/or witness and they also came to mind in my prayer life to help me in a wonderful way. Because of this program, I am now adding more scriptures to memory and praising God for changing me and getting me to another level of my salvation. I am currently working with Fish to get this program in a larger scale at this prison so that all can enjoy and grow and learn from it. God's work grows and is glorified through it. Thank you and God bless!

**Dennis Jackson, Pamlico**

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My name is Douglas Morrow. I am an inmate at Pamlico Correctional Institute. I have been blessed to be in the block with several faithful Christian brothers who have helped me through weekly study and fellowship to grow closer to Christ. This past few months, Fish, one of my brothers in Christ has started a MasterLife study in the block. **It is amazing to find out what being a Christian is supposed to be like**, and the joy I have found with fellowshiping with these men for the last 3 months. To learn that there is much more than just saying something, but living it, is helping to give me the desire to reach out to others.

I would recommend this study to anyone who wants to know more about Christ. It has encouraged me so much, and to see how much it has affected those that are participating, has been such a blessing.

I would like to thank all the people who are helping to facilitate this program, whether through prayer or financial aid. I want you to know that I am thankful, and to keep being who God wants you to be.

**Love in Christ, Douglas Morrow**

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First and foremost, I'd like to give all the honor and praise to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His everlasting love, mercy, and grace and for everything He has done for us.

I truly would like to thank MasterLife for helping me grow stronger spiritually toward Jesus. My testimony has increased more than I ever thought. It's amazing what MasterLife has done for me. Throughout this journey I've learned how to be true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and walk diligently with Him. These 14 weeks of full study has changed my life forever. Truly, I am blessed. Even in this enjoyment, **I can find peace and joy in Christ Jesus**. I truly will recommend to any brother that struggle with the devil, MasterLife truly changed my point of view about becoming a true Christian. This is my prayer to all of you, the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior. He lives and I'm redeemed by His blood and healed by His stripes. May the Lord bless you all abundantly forever.

**In Christ Jesus EC (Eric Chaico), Pamlico**

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## Tabor

### Why I Do What I Do

By Tim Jones

Being a part of this prison system for as long as I have been (41 years), I've witnessed many things and have been involved in the lives of many people that have made an impact on me one way or the other. I've also been actively involved in Christian fellowship and church ministry at some level at every facility that I've been assigned to since 1994, so I've gained a clear and up-close view of church matters. So when I tell you that MasterLife Discipleship Program has been a "God-sent" to the NCDPS, and that is by far the most productive discipleship class I have ever taken, you can believe that I am not just vainly talking or speaking as a novice.

The MasterLife Program was first introduced to me in 2013 at Caledonia Correctional center when this young man bold and full of confidence named James Benoy was transferred there, on fire spiritually for the Lord and eager to share this life changing program with the body of Christ. Well I've never been one to just jump into something without it being tested by someone else first, so when the first class began, I was not part of it. I've seen many men step out on their own using the name of Jesus to promote their own agendas or introduce their own doctrines (both practices which I strongly oppose). So, when Brother Ben started the MasterLife

class at Caledonia, I looked on from the "sidelines" for the first class, and I listened and looked for any signs of false doctrine or any agendas other than those that completely glorified God. There were few guys I knew in that first class that were mature in the Gospel and been blessed with the ability to discern biblical doctrines, so I asked questions about the class, and everyone I asked or spoke to concerning MasterLife's doctrine, all gave the same answers of it being totally scriptural and the best discipleship program they've had. With me being a strong supporter of anyone that truly seeks to honor and glorify God in ministry, I leaped at the chance to be a part of the next class because it had been proven to be God ordained. There have been different positions and assignments, I've been used in to serve the church for over 20 years, so the teaching and preaching were not new to me even though at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> MasterLife, I was being used in a leadership role in the church. I was still trying to be a voice of wisdom for the younger church leaders that the Lord had in place there, but I wasn't a worship leader at the time. Going through the Disciple's Cross (year 1) Class was a very unique experience because there was really very little of the material that I did not know already or that I wasn't applying to my life faithfully. **But what the class did for me was teach me how to truly teach others what true discipleship is in a structured manner** and show them what's truly required to follow Jesus according to the Word of God. Being in the same dorm as Brother Benoy was a blessing because it gave me the opportunity to really get to know this young man and to see this "disciple maker" transforming the world around him unlike anyone I've ever witnessed. I've been saved for over twenty years and had been active in church ministry when I was first introduced to MasterLife, but even until this present day I have never seen or been a part of a discipleship class that is so life changing for anyone sincerely seeking to follow Jesus. Eager to be given more of this teaching after completion of the Disciple's Cross (year 1) class, I was able to develop a close relationship and friendship with Brother Benoy, and by being in the same dorm I was blessed to have access to all the MasterLife materials and be instructed personally by him. As I went through books 2, 3, and 4 of the MasterLife Class with Brother Benoy, we discovered we shared the same vision of bridging the gap between the church crowd and the old convicts on the yard that truly needed to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know the impact that the MasterLife program had made on me could be shared with many people and because of its simple approach it would not overwhelm anyone we were trying to reach, and I decided that I really

wanted to be a part of the spiritual revolution that the Lord was bringing into the North Carolina Prison System through MasterLife. After going through four MasterLife workbooks, Brother Ben held a group leader training session that had ten other brothers that had proven themselves faithful and shared the vision of sharing the MasterLife program with the whole population. By the time the 3<sup>rd</sup> MasterLife class was starting there was twelve group leaders and we were all excited about seeing how the Lord was going to use us, and we were ready to be obedient to do whatever the Lord directed to do. To say that the Lord blessed the program greatly would be putting it in the mildest terms because over the next four years He did things and allow things that can only be described as "Amazing, Totally Amazing"! the program went from 30-40 men completing the class to over 100 men signing up every year. We began to see men taking the class that had "written God off", who were able to seek God again during the program as we were able to plant the seeds of the gospel and trust the Holy Spirit to give the increase. By the time I left Caledonia in February 2019, I had been called on to oversee the program because Brother Benoy was blessed to be accepted in the Pastoral Ministry Seminary class at Nash Correctional. Still trusting the Lord to continue to be faithful in everything that He ordains, we kept working to keep the vision alive and carry on the MasterLife principles because we had seen the Lord prove Himself over and over. MasterLife is designed to not only teach true discipleship but it also teaches men to become a "disciple maker" by following and fulfilling the great commission Jesus gave in Matthew 28:18-20. In class we encouraged men to share the things they had learned in MasterLife with everyone who would listen and carry it everywhere they went. So, there was little doubt that I was going to follow through on the same things when I was transferred to Tabor Correctional. Every facility has its own set of problems and challenges for the MasterLife program to deal with before it can reach the masses of the population, and Tabor Correctional is no different. No doubt about it, the enemy will do everything he can to keep men discouraged, but being a part of the MasterLife program for these past six years, I have been able to witness the power of God to break barriers, open doors that couldn't be opened in the past, turn hearts of administrators, and altogether make the impossible possible! So even if I have to disciple one man at a time or teach and share MasterLife with small groups only in my dorm as I am having to do now at Tabor Correctional I am totally committed to making known what the Lord calls us to do to be a true disciple of Jesus. **Let me make it**

**very clear that it is the Holy Spirit that changes** men and opens their understanding to the Word of God, MasterLife is only a platform on which the Holy Spirit uses to reach people that He already knew needed instruction in which the MasterLife program could provide. There are many ways that the Holy Spirit uses to reach men and many other Bible studies and discipleship programs, but my experience with the MasterLife program has taken me from the sideline and given me a permanent position on the team because I honestly live out the structure of the Disciple's Cross teachings on a daily basis, and I am truly sincere in my desire to share it with whoever, wherever, I go! I look forward to the direction the MasterLife movement will continue to move in as the Lord opens doors and paves the way for every man in the NC Department of Public Safety to have access to this life changing program. "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" Joshua 1:8, just like this proclamation of Joshua, I too claim this with my involvement with the MasterLife program because it has been a very important part of the man that the Lord has purposed me to be. As we move ahead here at Tabor in small numbers, we ask that the MasterLife family across the country keep us lifted up in prayer that God may be glorified in everything we do. Be blessed and remember to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path" Proverbs 3:5-6.

**God Bless you and so does Brother Tim!**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Praise be to God for all His goodness; this is little brother Cory here at Tabor Correction. I'm excited about what the Lord is doing for you all and the MasterLife program. I find that God is faithful to us His children. I'm just writing to let everybody know that since I was introduced to MasterLife I've seen heard of so many testimonies of how the Lord has been leading, healing, even delivering us from so many things. My journey as a disciple of Christ here at Tabor has been a challenge. I have been implementing the Disciple's Cross in my daily walk. I'm ever learning and hearing from the Lord in my everyday activities. I was so glad to see the MasterLife newsletter from last quarter. So many uplifting testimonies, I was able to share my article with others and they want to know more about to be a part of the program. I am looking forward here soon to start up the next class here at Tabor Correction along with a few other brothers from our program. I desire to see folks changed and who are sincerely hungry for the

Lord. I haven't dotted every "I" and crossed every "T", but I have a determination to follow Christ. Sometimes it's a challenge to put up with some of the stupidity we have to live around, but I have to remind myself that Christ is in control. "Greater is He that's in me than he that is in the world". Right!?!? Pray for me to not be moved in my stand for Christ. Pray that God will bring thirsty souls that want to hear about Him. I encourage you all to be the lights that you are that shine in dark places. A lot of inmates need to see the humility and love of Christ in this day and age. Love you all and may the Lord continue to bless.

**Brother Cory Thompson, Tabor**

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My Wake-Up Call!! The MasterLife program has inspired me to accept where I am and where I am going in life. The Lord has really given me a new way of thinking, living, and being who He put me on this earth to be and do. My whole life was going nowhere fast except down and believe me that's a place I never want to visit again, knowing and living the way that was ungodly had no effect on me as long as there was booze and drugs and sometimes so out of it, the women didn't matter. I've been dead physically two or three times in my life but that didn't seem to slow me down, it was a recess to get better and back into the game, thinking I've missed out on something. But the whole while my godly mind was saying to me, slow down or your gonna crash. God kept His hands on me I'm still here even though things from my past try to invade my future. Having lost my mother while I was in here was a very trying time for me in my life. But by the strength of my God, I've made it through. I'm now stronger, wiser, more spiritual through Jesus Christ, I feel there's nothing I can't accomplish through prayer and obedience. I've enjoyed the downtime and Bible studies with the brothers, and I know in my heart I can make a difference in someone else's.

**Douglas Spearman, Tabor**

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**NO Trained Sheep**

**By Kevin Jolly, Caledonia**

When I first started as a leader in the MasterLife Program at Caledonia under Bro. J. Benoy, he had all the leaders, meeting once a week, a few weeks before we started the Program. After two weeks he asked us to write out what we thought made a good leader. While I was having Q.T. one morning

this is what came to me. A good leader's example is in John 10:4 "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am

## Beatitudes

By Michael Benoy, New Hanover

[Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."](#)

Being **humble** and **broken** before God, knowing that all **good things** come from **Him** alone, and **submitting our lives** and **body**, and **jobs** and **possessions** keeps us rely on **Him** for all things.

Being **poor in spirit** is trusting in **God** before ourselves, being **obedient** to **Him** out of a **love** for **His truth**, **living in service** as a vessel of **Jesus** and the **Holy Spirit** to **labor** for the kingdom of Heaven.

I AM OBEDIENT TO GOD.

I AM HUMBLE.

I AM A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I BELONG TO JESUS.

I AM A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

I AM 100% TRUSTING AND RELIANT ON GOD.

I AM BLESSED.

I WILL SERVE HUMBLY.

known of mine."

Jesus is our LORD, but our perception of a lord is often of a boss. And when we think of a boss, lord, or master, we see laborers, servants, or slaves. And they're always pushing, driving, or forcing their subjects into the work that's mostly for their benefit. Jesus, on the other hand showed HIS lordship as a shepherd. And a shepherd always works for the benefit of the flock. The one drives with money, the promise of fame, or with whips. The other leads with love, trust, and patience.

Let me say it this way. We all are in a ten-story building. There are twelve exits out. The building is on fire, and only one of the exits is accessible. You want to get everyone out. Only you know the way, to the only way. If you try to drive them or push them, they will go in the way that seems right to them, but if you lead them like a good shepherd and stay

on the path that leads to the way out, all will be saved from the fire.

1 Peter 5:2-4, "Feed the flock of GOD which is among you, taking over sight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over GOD's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

We should follow Jesus' example, John 13:15, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you". Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11: 1, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ." We as leaders should live by 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in the world, in conversation, in charity (love), in spirit, in faith, in purity."

So, to be a good leader, we should follow the example of our LEADER, and follow HIS lead.  
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## Making Sense of My Senses

GOD created the Heaven and the Earth; and when you look at it with the terms of (a spiritual, and physical). Then we can see that we to arc (spirit and body). Understanding this we see (hat GOD made us so as that we can relate to HIS physical World. HE gave us our senses for this World, so when satan thought to bring down man, he used what was available to him, i.e. our senses. With Eve it was first hearing, then looking, then the, taste. It does not matter what order he uses them, but to understand that, this is the doorway to our minds.

We can easily see how our senses, used wrongly can harm us, i.e.... You know when you see that "one" who's just your type, you know FINE! Or their wearing less than nothing; and our emotions are on the run. And when you smell that drug you use to use; those feelings start to take us back to those times. I can still run over a station on the radio and hear an old tune I use to play all the time and my mind goes right back to when, where, and who I was with. And we all know what happens to the alcoholic who tastes one more swallow of alcohol. There are endless thoughts and emotions that our senses can bring back up.

From one end of the spectrum to the other our senses set off our emotions. Our emotions are at the seat of our soul, along with mind, and will. So, Making Sense of My Senses is essential to maintaining control over my emotions.

To help us stand against satan we need to know how to use the senses GOD gave us.

Just as satan uses our senses to bring us down, GOD meant them to bring us to HIM. Let's look at GOD's intent for our senses; (1) Hearing, Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD of GOD. Isaiah 55:3 "Incline your ear, and come unto ME: hear, and your soul shall live ... " (2) Sight, Isaiah 45:22, "look unto ME and be saved..." (3) Taste, John 8:52b "...if a man keeps MY saying, he shall never taste death." John 6:54, "Whoso eateth MY flesh, and drinketh MY blood, hath eternal life..." Psalms 34:8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good". (4) Smell, Psalms 45:7 " ..your GOD has anointed you..." 8a "All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia..." John 12:13b, "...and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment." (5) Touch, Matthew 9:2 "...If I may but HIS garment, I shall be whole." Luke 6:19 "and the whole multitude sought to touch HIM: for there went virtue out of HIM and healed them all." We don't tune out our senses just because satan can use them against us, if we do, we'll become desensitized. GOD doesn't won't us to stop feeling, if we do how will we ever empathize with others? Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep".

GOD gave us our senses and our emotions as aids in this World, to seek HIM out, and to seek out those that are lost and hurting. So, we live each day with the intent to use all our senses to LOVE.

By Kevin Jolly, Caledonia

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## Walt's Story

Hello, my name is Walter. I want to tell you about myself and how God through MasterLife has taught me what to do after being saved by Jesus Christ. Some of you already know me while others have never met me. I came out of the belly of the whale (prison) on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. I am born again which means I am a Christian for those who may not yet have come to know Jesus as their savior. It also means that the Holy Spirit which is God lives inside of me as He does in all of His children. I am a work in progress. I am a mess at times, and I thank God for His grace and mercy! My faithful fiancée/ Christian sister "Lili" is by my side as I write this. She is all that and more.

I am going to talk to you about things that you may or may not have experienced yet. I am going to also talk to you about how the Lord God used His Word, the Volunteers, Christian inmates, Christian staff and even a good French friend of mine to bring me into line with who I am and into His will for me.

I would like to share with you all an event that took place with me when I was in the county jail after I had rededicated myself to Christ. There were several inmates in my cell block that had homemade knives. I was not one of

them. The staff did a surprise search on the cellblock and several inmates got rid of their homemade knives' moments before the search. Since I was the Christian on the cellblock I got accused of snitching. A very tall inmate told me he was going to stab me as soon as the door to my little bed area opened the next morning. I remained calm and sat on my bed although I was already feeling the stress of court matters in my head. I heard the Holy Spirit tell me not to worry as I was praying, and He told me to go to sleep. So, I did, and I rested well in the peace that the Lord gave me. When I woke up before the doors opened the next morning, the Holy Spirit told me to wait until the door to my bed area opens then to go outside and have a seat on the table near the sleeping would be attacker. That was the complete opposite of what I would have done on my own. But when the doors opened I did exactly what the Lord had said. I sat on the table at peace and when the large man opened his eyes and saw me fear overwhelmed him. He sat up and wiped the sleep from his eyes. When he stood up, he apologized for threatening me and he also humbled himself and told the reasons for his unjust actions. I forgave him. The Lord tells us "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3 verses 5-6.

I left the county jail for prison about 22 months later. I began going to a bible study group on the cell block and before long I was also leading the bible study at times. A few years later this inmate named James Benoy showed up on the block. He joined the bible study group and soon after started talking about what we considered a radical program called "MasterLife". I led the revolt to reject it and to reject James Benoy! Most of us considered him a false teacher and power hungry. The majority of us refused to associate with him and his new MasterLife group on the cell block. Other Christian brothers and I considered ourselves protecting true Christian teachings by rejecting James Benoy and his evil agenda. Keep in mind that none of us had actually went through the program at that time at all. This was all based on what we heard and what we thought we were observing of this man and his program.

It wasn't until I started observing his actions and seeing his passion to bring people to Christ that I decided to really test what he was saying and doing according to the word of God. I saw him stand up against the administration over allowing unbiblical principles to take the place of God's word. I finally went to him and said "Benoy you are truly a man of God. I see that now. I was wrong for going against you and the things I

said and did. Will you forgive me?" James Benoy smile at me and asked me "Walter what was it that changed your mind about me?" It was the love and passion he had for others even the ones who came against him. I attended the MasterLife program groups and began being a group leader. I met several volunteers and fellow inmates who helped a great deal with the MasterLife program. I was even helped by some who supported the program from the outside who never set a foot in the prison but were just as powerful in their love for the brothers.

Great men and women of God like Brother Warren Stevenson, Brother Gene, Sister Roberta Joshua, Brother Travis Mileur and Reverend Farmer. Fellow inmates like Minister Timothy Jones also made a lasting impression on me and helped me grow. I placed that title in from of Tim's name because that is exactly what he is. In the Old Testament God even used unsaved men at times to help his people. I know what of those people who even when I was under attack from "worldly Christians" was used by God Almighty to continue to stand for the word of God. His name is Eric Grange known to most as Frenchie. If this man decides to come to Jesus Christ, he will be a powerful faithful man of God. God bless him!

If I could say one thing that has kept me while I have been out of prison this past year and a half it would be my quiet time with the Lord. If you talk to any Christian Brother who has been through the MasterLife program and ask them what is the single most repeated thing that was drilled into them during the program it would be QUIET TIME. That is that time that just you and the Lord spend together talking about anything and everything. reading scriptures with Him, sitting quietly with Him, or crying out to Him in prayer. It could be in the morning or at night or even in the middle of the afternoon. It could be for 5 minutes, 15 minutes or even longer. But it is an everyday thing. The Lord loves that time with us. He walked in the

Garden with Adam and Eve and He walked with the Disciples. He even walked on Emmaus Road speaking His word to others. He enjoys that time with us!

MasterLife goes to the core of what it is to be a Christian and to walk in the light. Through scriptural sound teachings it will use the word of God to make you look at yourself through the word of God and humble you. If you are serious about being a child of King Jesus, then you will get out of MasterLife a greater understanding of what it is to be a true born-again Christian walking in the light!

I must tell you about how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit recently did a great thing in my life and the life of my fiancée. Let me start by the fact for about five years my fiancée has not had a relationship with her father. Just the mention of his name would cause her to become very sarcastic about him. It was bad. Really bad. He had nothing to do with her and she had nothing to do with him.

I must tell that during that time my fiancée and I were friends and she had revealed to me that she was a witch and that her family religion was worshipping an idol of a skeleton woman in robes. When she showed me, the room dedicated to this idol and I saw the huge idol I was completely stunned! The whole room belonged to this idol and a large number of candles and food sacrifices filled this room. There was a smaller similar idol also in the room. I felt the demonic presence immediately. I could feel the hostility against me from that demonic presence and I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to me inside. My own thoughts were to go hard on here about what she was worshipping and push the Lord basically down her throat. My own thoughts were that if she rejected all that to distance myself from her. But the Holy Spirit said No! She even began to be hostile toward me verbally when I mentioned Jesus. My sister who is a minister feared I wasn't strong enough yet to deal with a person like this who's family was deep into this demonic worship even though that didn't realize it was a demon. My sister told me to separate from her friendship in fear that I would be drawn into it also. I was feeling the same way. But the Holy spirit told me No!

It sickened me when Lili would put down my Lord Jesus at times and she would make sarcastic comments about Him. I would become very angry. But the Holy Spirit said she has been called to be a child in the family of God Almighty. She would bring food offerings to that idol once a week and it disturbed me to the point that I did even want to enter her house. I could feel that hostile demonic presence overshadows her and move about within that house.

I prayed for her often and the Holy Spirit in His wisdom showed me opportunity after Opportunity to inject the Word of God into situations in a way that fit so well that it slowly made her increasingly curious about the ways of Jesus. She began to ask questions. Her questions were ones I learned to answer from what I learned in MasterLife by using scripture but in an everyday type language that she could relate to. I finally saw what the Lord had been trying to tell me. She had been called and she had a strong misguided faith but powerful. That type of faith if it was directed toward the True God

would be amazing! I told my sister about what was happening.

Lili soon gave her life to the Lord and announced it to me and her family. Her brother and mother were stunned and as you can imagine sarcastic things were said toward her about her choice even up to this

month. She stood strong and I was amazed at how the Lord had worked within her so quickly. We became a couple.

Just a couple a months ago the Lord urged me to speak of Lili reconnecting with her father. The Lord had a plan! Lili and I went to pay our cell phone bill and guess who just happened to be walking across the parking lot to the same store? Her father and his new family! It was awkward for them. But the Holy

Spirit urged me to tell them to exchange numbers and they did.

Soon they were communicating almost every day. We even went out to eat more than once with him. The Lord was going to use this reconnected relationship to rescue Lili and I and we had no idea at the time.

Lili and I were working together in a very hostile work environment and a processing plant. She was being sexually harassed on a constant basis and I was being treated very badly because of our interracial relationship. She is Mexican/Italian and I am black. The plant was almost all Hispanics and we were the only interracial couple that we knew of. It was bad on us. They wanted to get rid of us and they got the opportunity.

Lili and I had arrived at work one night. The constant sexual harassment which the administration refused to acknowledge caused Lili to be very uncomfortable at work. Seated under the "time clock" were several guys. I slid my badge through the clock to "clock in" for work and my body was almost touching them. Lili passed me her badge and asked me to slide hers for fear her breast would rub against them. This was all done on camera and in front of the human resource department. A few days later we were called in to the human resource department one at a time and asked about it. We each told the same story without ever talking to each other about it that night. Our story was confirmed, and the human resource night manager agreed that she saw exactly why we did it on camera recordings. But she claimed that it was a zero tolerance for it and suspended us pending possible termination. The strange thing was that out of the blue she said it was not about racism. Wow! Why would she put that statement out there? While on suspension waiting for a decision whether to terminate us or keep us, the lord spoke to me while I was in a dream like state. He said whether she fires us or keeps us tell her this "Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy". I told Lili what I was told by the Lord to say to the human resource night manager. She told me to make sure I do it. So about three days later after hearing nothing from human resources we called them. The nightshift human resource

manager said we were terminated. I told her the exact thing the Lord told me to say and I added I see no mercy (given) here. I thanked her and said goodbye.

Lili and I were now jobless. Now this is how the Lord set things up in advance. Lili's newly reconnected relationship with her father was growing stronger. When he

**Man's Ruin and God's Redemption**  
**By G. Ross**  
 In the Garden of Eden  
 God's command was disobeyed  
 Upon Adam and his seed  
 Condemnation would be laid  
  
 This first man's sin  
 Passed on all the human race  
 But God had a plan  
 To give salvation by His Grace  
  
 No greater demonstration  
 Of God's love this world would see  
 Than to look upon the sinless One  
 Who hung upon the tree  
  
 Jesus Christ had a purpose  
 When sent down to this earth  
 To seek and save the sinner  
 To give them a new birth  
  
 Upon a cruel Cross  
 God's Son was crucified  
 For sinner's transgressions  
 It was there that He died  
  
 God laid upon Jesus  
 The sins of us all  
 To save us from judgment  
 That came through the fall

**Man's Ruin and God's Redemption**  
 ...  
 This Savior was born  
 From a pure virgin's womb  
 Christ lived, bled and died  
 And was laid in a tomb  
  
 There's still more to  
 This Gospel that's been said  
 For on the third day  
 Jesus rose up from the dead!  
  
 The Father raised Him up,  
 Christ lives forevermore!  
 If you desire to be saved  
 He is the only door  
  
 Born of God's Holy Spirit  
 Dear reader, all must be  
 To enter into Heaven  
 And Jesus forever to see  
  
 Jesus is the Redeemer  
 Of sinners this is true  
 If you call upon His name  
 He will save you too  
  
 Repent and Believe the Gospel  
 A new creation you will be  
 For Jesus said who He makes free  
 Will truly be free indeed!

found out our situation, he got us jobs in a large company doing basically what we had been doing before but in a more professional atmosphere. The Lord even had given us another job offer at the same time. All of this in less than a month of getting fired! That's the Lord. I even found out that the government had money waiting in limbo for me that they owed me from over 10 years ago! This reminded me of the scripture where Jesus tells us not to worry that if the birds of the air and the flowers of the field are cared for by God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) how much more will He take care of our needs as His children?

God arranges things and His plans are always successful. He never fails. He has plans for us and for you too! His plan for Lili and I is not working for this company till He returns. We are awaiting His command to go on to the next step.

My advice to you all who are reading these words is to take the MasterLife program and to go through each course of study and take good notes. Live those notes because they all come straight out of the word of God. Listen to the speakers whether they are fellow inmates or volunteers because the Lord is speaking to you through them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. May our God bless you and keep you through all the storms of this world. Come quickly Jesus! We are eagerly awaiting the rapture to meet you in the air our Lord!

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## Testimonies

I've been putting off writing to you for such a long time, but it's been on my heart to do so. More than anything, I want to thank you so much for all you've done. Although my time at Caledonia has come and gone, my time in the MasterLife program has stayed with me. I still am being taught to this very day. The Holy Spirit still sends me back to Luke 9:23 and John 15:5 specifically. I recently tried my own way to show some people they have been misled concerning the truth about Jesus, but I did it without relying on the Lord (tried to do it - LOL). I later realized John 15:5. I've realized that apart from Jesus, I cannot present the gospel and bear any meaningful fruit without relying on Him, even though I may have good intentions, apart from Him, I can do nothing - Amen. I just wanted to tell you that, even though you've never heard from me, MasterLife supplied in me the foundation of a relationship with Jesus. I thank you from the bottom of my heart and I

thank God. The Lord used Benoy to find a sheep that had strayed very far away, but there is no distance too far for God's grace. All the treacherous and horrible things I did in my life before, to God to still love me enough and call out to me again, that really is amazing grace. His love is boundless and timeless. Once again, I cannot express enough my gratitude for everyone's labors in the MasterLife ministry, it changed the course of my life. Thank you, my brother, in Christ for your support and for putting out your lamp where everyone can see.

P.S. I have many brothers in Christ whom I miss but can you please tell Benoy that I said hello and that I miss him and hope he's doing well. Also, tell him thank you for allowing God to use him because his efforts were not in vain. He was the one Jesus used to bring me back to Him.

### Jonathon Berry, Lumberton

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Hello, my name is Joshua Parlee. I was reading some past newsletters and felt inspired by God to share my testimony. I didn't come from a strong Christian background. My grandmother Reba used to take me to church every Sunday. Well, make me go to church is more aptly but, I was 7-8 years old. I've went to several churches here and there. Mainly those around my home. Then one day this pastor said that anyone with long hair was queer. So that made me mad. I asked that Jesus had long hair, did that make Him queer? My Dad had long hair at the time, did that make him queer? So, I just walked out and never looked back. That was it for my church going. So, I started being a hood rat, shop lifting mostly. I had some run-ins with the law. I was like 10, so they just called my Dad. He'd pick me up at the station, he seen the path I was going on, so we moved. Now, my Dad has always been there but at the same time he wasn't. what being a single parent (my parents split up when I was two) and having to work from sunup to sundown. In 2000, my grandmother died, that really hurt. That was the start of my downward spiral. In 2003, my mom was shot and ended up paralyzed from the waist down. I was 14 or so. I went and visited her in ICU, it crushed me. I told her I will get him back for this. Then 1 week after my mom was shot, my cousin, my best friend, stole a car, got in a cop chase, wrecked the car and died. This happened in 2003. That's when I started blaming God and asking Him why He kept taking from me. that's when I became a "Satanist". I was lost. I started stealing my Mom's pain pills, now I still had baseball. Then that's all I'd do, pills, then baseball. I used my baseball workouts to mask my pill addiction. Then girls and partying became my life.

Baseball started to take less of a roll and drugs a bigger one. Then my Mom got off morphine and started getting this super pain killer called opana. This was in 2007. That's when I went to my bottom. In January 2018, I sold a pill to a friend, he went home, gave 1/2 to his friend after doing Xanax, the next day his friend is dead. I ended up with 17-23 years in 2009. Satan got his hands on me and really destroyed my life. But I'm not blaming him, I was blaming God for this, I was at Polk. Now, in September of 2009, I saw the truth and God saved me. I went to Foothills and started to read the Bible. Then I got shipped to Alexander. That's where I met Benoy. Now all I heard was he was a Bible thumper. So, I stayed away. I got in a few fights with gangs because I was young, white and fresh on State. A home front got me a job in the warehouse. I was moved from C-block to D-block "The Christian Block" on Green Unit. When Benoy came in from the yard, he came over and asked if I believed in God. I said yes. He invited me to his Bible study, I told him I was good. So, I sat and observed. I saw about 10-15 men of different backgrounds go back there. I asked myself, what could it hurt. I gave in. Just in time too. That was my introduction to MasterLife. He ended up having me teach a part of the Disciple's Cross. I had some analogy of a junkyard or something like that. Benoy then had this trivia game at the end of the 3-week study. The joy, happiness, and excitement were all it took. I made a vow "I would never turn my back on God, the day I do, is the day I die". Now, I'm not as strong in my faith as I was but my faith is still there. I just want to say thank you Benoy for being a friend and a brother in Christ, I love you man, God Bless.

### Joshua Parlee, Marion

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## The Gospel: "To The Convict"

### What Happened? "Everything was perfect until..."

It seems like life is a chain of mistakes and regrets in which we find ourselves exclaiming, "if I could just have one more chance", or "if I had only known", or "aaawww man!" Then there is the famous line, "everything was perfect until I decided to..." At some point we ask the question, *if there is a loving God, then why does He let bad things to happen?* In fact, I remember asking a similar question even after surrendering my life to God. I asked Him, *what happened to me God, why did I have to go through all of this mess, why did I have to become a habitual-criminal-drug-*



*addict before coming to my senses and learning the truth. Why Couldn't I have been one of those kids who learned early and lived the right way? God, why didn't you do something? It just ain't fair,* I exclaimed! The short answer is, we live in a fallen world and our sins have separated us from God; however, God has a master plan that is going to fix everything! He reveals these things in the storyline of scripture beginning with the creation, the fall, God's promise, man's condition, and the solution—Jesus Christ.

### Creation (Gen. 1-2).

God does not make bad things happen. In the beginning, "everything was perfect." God created a perfect world and He placed two perfect people in the world—Adam and Eve (Gen. 1 :31). They were male and female, made in the image of God/Jesus (Gen. 1 :26-27). God gave them authority over the creation (Gen. 1 :28). God fellowshiped with them (Gen. 1:8). God did not make puppet-people or robot-people who would be programmed to obey Him and love Him. He wanted them to *choose* to love and obey Him, which is reasonable (Josh. 24: 15). We wouldn't want to force someone to love us, would we? Therefore, God created Adam and Eve with the freedom to choose by giving them something to choose—Him or a tree! He commanded them not to eat the fruit of *one tree!* That's it! He gave them everything they could have dreamed of, except one tree. That one tree represented their freewill, their freewill to obey Him or not to obey, to love Him or not to love Him.

### The Fall (Gen. 3).

God did not make this mess we are in. In fact, it has been shown that "everything was perfect until... until Adam and Eve decided to listen to a voice that was not the voice of God (Gen.3: 1-6). Satan came into the perfect paradise and opened his mouth. He used his cunning manipulating ways to trick mankind into choosing disobedience. However, Adam and Eve made the decision to turn away from God's way and do things their own way (Gen.3:6). This act of disobedience brought sin and death into God's perfect creation and the consequences were catastrophic (Gen.2: 17, Rom.5: 12-14). God knew what they would choose, however, it was either give them freewill or make them puppet-men, which was not an option for God. Nevertheless, God is not to blame for this mess; it was Adam and Eve's free choice to obey or disobey.

### The Promise (Gen. 3:15).

God's love for mankind caused Him to create Adam and Eve in spite of what they would do. The awesome thing about our God is, not only did He foreknow that Adam and Eve would mess things up, but, He already had a plan to fix the mess, a plan that would, bring mankind back into fellowship with Himself (Gen. 3:15, Rom. 5:15-21, 8:28-29). God turned this plan into a promise (Gal.3: 16,18). What was this promise? He promised to send His Son into the world to die on a cross to pay the debt that would redeem mankind from the penalty of sin (Jn. 3:16). This promise was the most sacrificial display of love ever heard of.

### The Human Condition What Happened to ME? (Is.59:1-8)

So, what's up with us? How many times have we been in a situation only to cry out, how did I get in this mess? On a personal level, we got in this mess because of two reasons: First, we are born into this world and we have inherited the sin of Adam (Rom.5: 12). Second, we choose to reject God's plan of salvation and live our own way, a choice that forfeits our help from God (Is. 59:1-3; 53:6; Rom. 1: 18-32). Using my family to illustrate: My brother and I were born into the Benoy family, a family that had their own rules and standards like any other family. You can call this "the Benoy moral laws." Why we were born into this particular family, only God knows? That's just the way it happened. Since we are here, we either live by the rules or we choose to rebel. In our home, dad did not tolerate criminal behavior. He used to tell us that they have places for people who break the law—prison. He would assert, "I did not raise you boys to be criminals, so if that's the way you want to live your life, don't call here for help." He always added, "but, if you want to go to school, or serve your country, or work hard and live right then I will do anything within my power to help you." These were some of the Benoy standards. However, as strong-willed, stubborn, and rebellious children, we chose to test the waters. I remember when my life took its turn for the worst: I was eighteen-years-old and in college and my brother Michael was seventeen-years-old and in the U.S. Army. Our father and mother were as proud of us as any parent could be. "Life was perfect until... " Drugs, alcohol, and wild women detoured our lives. Less than a year later we had been removed from school, discharged from the military and were sitting in jail. Furthermore, we had ruined our relationship with our parents. Our decision to take a detour had consequences that altered the course of our entire lives. The regret deep inside the pit of my soul screamed, *how did I get in this mess?* The same way that Adam and Eve's disobedience broke the perfect fellowship they had with God the Father, my

brother and I broke the fellowship we had with our family. Our father did nothing more than establish the rules; we chose to disregard them and go our own way. Dad told us from the beginning, there is a place for people who break the law—prison. In the same way, God tells us that Adam's disobedience brought death, separation from Him, and eternal damnation. This was God's standard from the beginning.

I still ask God *why did it take twenty-five years for me to come to my senses?* This answer is simple: I thought I had it all figured out; I knew it all, I had all the sense, I was stubborn, I wouldn't listen to anybody, I, I, I, me, me, me, my, my, my, I think, I feel, I want! The Bible has a lot to say about what happened to all of us. It also gives us the solution.

The prophet Isaiah proclaims: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. **But your iniquities have separated you from your God;** and your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that **He will not hear.** For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, nor does *any* plead for truth, they trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive I evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of **peace they have not known,** and *there is* no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way **shall not know peace**" (Is. 59:1-8).

Simply put, God *can* hear us, and He *can* save us, but our sins have separated us from Him, and He *will not* help us. As a result, we have no peace.

There is a war going on in the world, Satan and his minions are reigning havoc on God's creation, deceiving them and distracting them from the truth of God's plan. The Bible explains that the "whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn.5:19). All of mankind is born under the powerful influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-2). They have been taken captive by the devil to do his will (2Tim. 2:26). They are enemies of God, slaves of sin, with Satan as their master (Rom. 5:8-10; 6:17, 20; 8:7). The unsaved world is oblivious of what's going on. They live day by day chasing after the thing of the world to bring them temporary pleasures and satisfaction, not knowing that they are fighting against God's plan (1 Pt. 4:3; Jam.

4:4). This is the answer to the "what happened to me" question.

### How do I get out of this Mess?

The next question we need to ask is, how can I make things right with God and be reconciled to Him? First of all, psalms fifty-one allows us to look at a very intimate encounter between God and David, an encounter that tells us how we should approach God.

**"Have mercy upon me,** O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, **blot out my transgressions.** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For **I acknowledge my transgressions,** and my sin *is* always before me. Against You, you only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, *and* blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; **Wash me,** and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness,

*That* the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. **Create in me a clean heart,** O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation** and uphold me *by Your* Generous Spirit. *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. **Deliver me** from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For you do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a **broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart**— These, O God, you will not despise" (Ps. 51: 17). "The LORD *is* near to those who have a **broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit**" (Ps. 51:18).

Furthermore, the story of the prodigal son is a beautiful picture of our dilemma and God's merciful love: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, **give me** the portion of goods that falls **to me.**' So, he divided to them *his* livelihood. "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. "But **when he had spent all,** there arose a severe famine in that land, and **he began to be in want.** "Then he went and joined himself to a

citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*. **When he came to his senses,** he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. "And he arose and came to his father. **But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.** "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, '**Bring out the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'** And they began to be merry" (Lk. 15:11-24).

These passages show an attitude of the heart, an attitude of brokenness. One must be convicted of their sins, admitting their rebellion against God, and asking for His forgiveness. However, the Word of God declares that there is only one way to receive forgiveness and restoration with God. Jesus says, "I Am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by Me" (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). Furthermore, God's standard requires that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Lev. 4:20; Heb. 9:22). There must be a payment for your personal sins, a blood payment (Ex.24:3-8; Heb. 9:20). Remember, Adam sin brought death into the world and "the payment for sin is death" (Rom. 5: 12, 6:23). Therefore, everyone must die to pay for their sins. However, if you can bring a perfect substitute to die in your place, you go free (Heb. 9:27-28). The rest of Romans 6:23 should unwrap God's plan for you. "The payment for sin is death, **but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus, the perfect sinless Son of God became our payment for sin. God's plan is as simple as receiving Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as your personal payment for your sins. The one who does this will instantly receive forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, and eternal life in heaven. Furthermore, they will receive His Holy Spirit, a new purpose, and the joy and peace that one has longed for (Gal. 3: 14, 4:6). Jesus Christ is the only way out of the sin-mess we were born into (Jn. 14:6).

So, how do you get out of this mess? The scriptures below show that one can be saved by believing that God sent His son Jesus to take our sins so that we could be forgiven, cleansed, and made righteous in His sight. This is a free gift of God that we have by faith; therefore, if we willingly confess our sins and confess the Lord Jesus as our savior, we will be saved (Eph2:8-9; Rom. 10:9-10). As a result, we become new creatures, our old life is past, and a new life has begun (2 Cor. 5: 17). A brand-new beginning.

- "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So, they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:30-31).
- "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3: 16).
- "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9).
- "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).
- "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).
- "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17).

### God Delivered His Promise

#### "Who do you say that I AM?" (Mk. 8:27)

Jesus Christ is the foundation of God's plan to fix everything. After *The Fall* messed things up, God set His plan in motion, His plan to redeem mankind from sin (Gen.3: 15). The story is so detailed and profound that this article will not cover all of the theological aspects; however, there are some ideas to be brought forth that will encourage the incarcerated persons. As one devotes himself to the Word of God, these ideas will help the incarcerated see that God chose a stubborn and rebellious people who habitually offended Him (Ex.33: 1-5). Furthermore, He sent His Son Jesus to earth through a family from the bottom of society. Jesus lived and hung out with the unclean, the uncool crowd, the misfits, and the misfortunate. He was despised, mistreated, and executed by the

most prominent people of society. The whole while He loved, forgave, and saved anyone who would receive Him. Hallelujah! Hopefully, the ideas within the next few pages will bring a smile to your heart and cause you to see an angle of Jesus' life that you have never before considered. After reading *Vintage* by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears (Vintage Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois), which many of these ideas were gleaned, I have developed a deeper understanding of the perfection of God's amazing plan of redemption and what everybody has to say about Jesus of Nazareth. As we move forward, ask yourself, *who do I say Jesus is?*

Jesus asked His disciple, "what's everybody saying about me? Who do they say that I am?" And the disciples said to Him, "some say you're John the Baptist, some say Elijah, some say a prophet. Upon further examination of the scriptures one will find that Jesus was also deemed crazy by his own brothers, and a deceiving devil by the religious leaders. Everybody had a perception of the Son of God. However, Jesus asked His followers, "who do you say that I am?" Peter quickly responded, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" There are many ideas about who Jesus is. Throughout history there has never been someone so controversial, so loved and hated than Jesus. Why so much controversy? What was so special about this guy? And who is Jesus Christ of Nazareth? We will examine a modern day parallel of Jesus, what has been said about Him throughout history, and what the Bible says about Him. From there you can determine who you will say that Jesus is.

The story of Jesus Christ sounds absurd to many living in this post-modern world, and rightly so, for the Bible itself asserts that the gospel message is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Cor. 1: 18). Think about it, if Jesus would have been born today how would the story be described? The story would most likely air on Jerry Springer or appear in the *National Enquirer*. Before paralleling the story of Jesus with a modern-day lower-class family, we must get a little background on the town of Nazareth.

The scriptures give us our first perception of the people of Nazareth, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46). The population was about five-hundred, it was hill-country, with carpenters, downcast, poor, lower-class of society (cite). They most likely watched Jerry Springer, the Walking Dead, football, and Nascar. Nazarene's might have fit right in with our trailer parks and ghettos. Nevertheless, these were a people who believed in God! They were poor, but they were what we would basically call "good people." It's important to understand that Jesus did not only come to the poor and downtrodden of society, He came *through* a

poor and downtrodden family—Jesus identified with the people at the bottom of society. Today's version of the story would probably read as such:

A fourteen-years-old unmarried young girl from Nazareth (the hood) claims that she is pregnant with God's baby. Can you imagine the scandal? First of all, according to the law she should have been stoned to death. Furthermore, they probably thought she was lying, crazy, or both. She would have definitely been deemed dysfunctional. Then, eight and a half months into the pregnancy her boyfriend, a construction worker from down the street, tells her to pack up the donkey cause their moving to his hometown. When they get there, they can't find a place to rent; the poor girl's young, tired, homeless and pregnant. What else can go wrong? Oh yeah, her water can break! So, she has the baby in a barn. She barely has time to recover when they find out there's a "hit" out on the little fellow's life. So, they go into the witness protection program, on the run. As the years pass by and things settle down, they return to Nazareth. Life is going just fine until Jesus grows up and starts running around town telling everybody that he's God's Son! He claims that He has all power, that He can forgive sins, and He's the only way to heaven. Yes, everyone can agree that this story does sound a little ludicrous. The amazing thing is, He begins to prove it. He heals the blind, the lame and the dumb. He casts out devils, heals the sick and raises the dead. Then, He forgives sins, allows people to worship Him, and claims equality with God. This enrages the leaders of the local churches; so, they get together and call the cops on him. They corrupt the D.A., buy off the judge, and send the guy to death row. No problem for Jesus; for His grand finale, He raises Himself from the dead, goes back to the hood, and appears to over five-hundred people—and the media has been looking for Him ever since. How's that for controversy?

Throughout history much has been said about Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth has continued to live in the hearts, minds, homes, history, music, plays, movies, and lips of people around the world. He is prayed to in the pulpit, at the dinner table, on the fifty-yard-line, in the Whitehouse, and by our bedside. He is sung to in churches, acknowledged in our constitution, engraved on our currency, pledged to in our allegiance, and we actually measure our time by Him. In 1892, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Jesus Christ is the redeemer of all of mankind. Furthermore, Jesus has been referred to as: **The Son of God, a son of God, the Ark Angel Michael, a prophet, a priest, a king, a good man, a moral miracle-worker, and a healer.** He has been called a lunatic, a liar, a deceiver, a devil, an imposter, and the brother of Lucifer. Oh, and Madonna had a T-shirt that referred to Jesus as her "homeboy."

Everybody has had something to say about Jesus, and regardless of what one concludes, the question cannot be ignored, everyone must answer the question, who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is God's promise and plan. The Bible declares that Jesus is the Son of God, God in the flesh, and the Word of God (Jn. 1:1, 14; 3:16). He is the visible image of the invisible God... by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on the Earth... All things were created through Him and for Him... and He is before all things and in Him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17). Jesus is also the perfect, sinless, sacrificial lamb that was slain for the sins of the world. God told Abraham that **He** (God) would provide *Himself* a sacrifice and He did (Gen. 22:8).

In the person of Jesus Christ, God came to Earth born of a virgin, lived thirty-three sinless years on the Earth. He was hated without cause (Jn. 15:25), rejected by His own people (Acts 7:35), delivered up because of envy (Mark 15:10), and crucified on Calvary's cross between two convicts (Lk.23:39). He died and was buried in a borrowed tomb, a tomb that was guarded by Roman soldiers (Matt. 27:59-66). Three days later Jesus Christ rose from the dead just as it was prophesied (Matt. 28:6-7). He is now seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven and will return again for all who believe on Him and put their trust in His payment for their sins (Rom. 8:34; Jn. 14:1-3; Jn. 3:16). He longs for you to accept Him, but He does not beg or force you to make this choice. If you make this decision to receive His Salvation, you will receive His Holy Spirit who will come and reside in your heart (Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:6). You will be filled with the love, joy and peace of knowing that you are now a child of God and will dwell

with Him and all believers for eternity in heaven (Gal. 5:22-23). You will learn of Him and His ways, He will teach you how to live a Godly life, and involve you in His mission here on Earth, a mission to tell others about His gift of Salvation (Matt. 1 1:28-30; Jn. 15:26-27). You will be a brand-new creation!!! Hallelujah!!!! (2 Cor. 5:17).

However, if you reject this free gift of salvation, you are guilty of blasphemy against His Holy Spirit which is an unpardonable sin after you depart from this world (Matt. 12:31-32). You will stand at Judgement and pay the full penalty for this and all other sins in your life (Mk. 1; Heb. 9:27). The payment for your sins is death" (Rom. 6:23). It is important for you to understand what death is: *death* is not "life's over" and you are buried six feet in the ground. Do not be deceived, **you will live forever** in eternity somewhere—Heaven or Hell (Rev. 21:7-8). God does not send you to hell but offers you a free ticket out. You alone make the choice (Josh. 24:15). This decision must be made while the Holy Spirit is drawing you, wooing you to surrender your life to Jesus; while you are convicted of your sins

and tired of your life and your selfish ways (Jn. 6:44,65; 12:32). Those who come after Him, dropped everything and immediately follow Him; denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Him (Matt. 4:22; Lk. 9:23). You get to start a new life, forgiven, reconciled to God, with new meaning and purpose (2 Cor. 5: 17-21). This is the most important decision you will ever make in your entire life.

Is it possible that God sent His Son to be a part of a less-than-average family? Did He actually grow up among a despised ethnicity? Did He really face problems and temptations? Does He have the secret to overcoming this world? Is He God's promise and plan to redeem mankind? YES! Yes! yes! And what better way to reveal His plan!!! Jesus rejoiced that God chose to hide these things from the wise and prudent and reveal them unto babes (Jn. 10:21). The Word declares that God chose the foolish people, the people that the world considers to be nothing; He did this to shame the ones who think they are wise (1 Cor. 1:18-29). This is GOOD NEWS!!! However, the question remains:

**Who do you say that Jesus is?**

Talk to Him, confess that you have been wrong, and you are sorry for sinning and rebelling against Him. Tell Him that you do not want to live as His enemy anymore. Ask Him to come into your heart and live forever. Now read: Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 4:4; Rev. 3:20.  
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**NASH, NCFMP**

**Housekeeping**

To all my brothers that I have served with in the Lord – I Love you guys! A big encouragement to my Caledonia Brothers:

Craaaaiig 😊, the rest of the MasterLife Family, and those that have moved on: Lonnie Cassel, Clapp, Big Tim and everyone else). Love you guys, man. Continue to walk with Jesus Christ. There is no life worth living apart from Christ Jesus. **BETTER BELIEVE THAT!!**

We've made it to the close of another year, in preparation to start another, and as we do, (and this goes out to everyone reading this): expect a miracle from God, specifically for you! In Jesus name, Amen. As for me I am sooo looking forward to this holiday break (seminary is a beast 😊), but I'm loving it. In closing, the Lord bless all of you in Christ Jesus, Amen.

**Your brother Craig Williams, Nash**

Shout out to squirrel, Tim Jones, Gene Poirier at Bertie – I haven't forgotten you guys.

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Greetings MasterLife Family, what a joy to hear from you and see that you are still serving our gracious God, His Son Jesus, through the Spirit's power. To my family at Caledonia (Bro. Gizmo, Kenny, Mr. Lee, Chuck, Jolly, Tim, James, Luke). I love you all. We are here at Nash doing God's will and miss you dearly. Looking forward to our Christmas party where we can share about the greatest gift ever given – Jesus the Son of God. Take care and Merry Christmas!

**Love, Bro. Jesse T. Bracey, Nash**

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Peace and blessings to all my brothers and sisters in Christ. I know it has been a long time since I have written and said hello to my MasterLife Family but know that I love and miss you guys so much. I am doing well in seminary, yes, the workload is heavy, but God. I hope and pray that everyone has a Merry Christmas and trust that God is working on our behalf as we speak. Stay strong and give glory to the King. Bro. Tim, Luke, Kenny, Mr. Lee I love and miss you guys, hold on our time is coming. To Brother Travis, thank you for all that you do for the MasterLife program and your family on the inside. I will continue to lift you and God's ministry up in prayer.

**Love Brother Isaac "Zeke" Timmons, Nash**

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My name is Laurice Raynor and this is my MasterLife testimony. While I was housed in Unit #2 at Nash, I witnessed something I never thought would be possible in prison. I saw many large groups of men sitting together studying the Word of God through the MasterLife program. Now I am in a MasterLife study group in Unit #4 with a group of men I call my brothers and Jesus Christ. Thank you, James Benoy for being the driving force for MasterLife at Nash. It's all possible because of your dedication.

**Sincerely, Laurice Raynor, Nash**

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First of all, all glory and honor to Father God in the name of Jesus. Secondly, I'd like to send thanks to Travis and all the saints of God who donate their time to help us all. MasterLife program is undeniably a great program for inmates. For there are so many struggles and myths for the incarcerated. Indeed, myths are exactly what it is because every day is a

struggle, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).

I met James Benoy in August 2013 at Caledonia and he's been witnessing and leading people to Christ ever since. He persuaded me to sign up for the very first official MasterLife program at Caledonia. Also, he had Tim Jones, a brother who I had not seen since 1991 at Bun, helping him out along with Jesse Bracey, whom I met at that time as well. I thank God for all those brothers.

To all of my Caledonia brothers Tim, Gizmo, Big Kenny, Mr. Lee and to the rest, far too many to name, God Bless and I love you brothers.

**Your brother in Christ, Ronald Ricks (Rick), Nash**

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My name is Danny Greene, and I am studying the MasterLife program with a group of Christian brothers and Unit #4 at Nash. Before I started MasterLife study, I never had many friends, and I read my Bible by myself. Now that I'm involved in the MasterLife study, I am part of a group of men that make me feel what it truly means to be a real disciple of God, and what it means to love one another.

**Sincerely, Danny Greene, Nash**

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Greetings brothers, I hope and pray that all of you are continuing to fight the good fight if faith, and that the Lord is your place of rest and comfort in the midst of any turmoil, trials, or persecutions. Well, I had the honor of finally completing all four MasterLife books with three awesome brothers/co-laborers in the ministry. Those brothers were Fred Washington, Loren Hammonds aka. "Hambone", and Aaron Estes. Two things I would like you to know about this experience. First, the devil does not like when we try to grow in the Lord and witness to or disciple others. He will try to divide the brothers. He will try to plant thoughts, negativity, gossip, slander, or descension among the group. Be on guard, for we have a real enemy, who has real power, yet he has no power over us if we remained attached to the vine: Christ Jesus (John 15:5). Second, the daily quiet time with the Lord is the most important of any of the MasterLife Books. If you don't do anything else, please take your daily quiet time with the Lord seriously, He will speak to you personally through His Word. Ask God what He wants you to glean from the text, and as you write "what God said to me" just let it flow. Think and reflect

on yourself during this time and God will move. Brothers, MasterLife has helped me grow exponentially in the Lord. He has answered so many of mine and my brother's prayers. Seriously, I can't even begin to think of them all, but I'll give you one that brings joy to my heart. In late 2017, me, James Benoy, and all the brothers in the seminary began to pray for three very specific things to happen in my little sister "Lilli's" life. First, that she would come to know Christ. Second, that God would give her a good influence to be around. Lastly, that she would be discipled and grow in faith. God has answered all three of these prayers, my sister is deeply involved in the church. She serves at church on Sundays, she is involved in "Younglife" and "Campaigners" which is live discipleship/Bible study program and God brought a young woman named Emily into her life, who is a great influence and who happens to be discipleship leader. Please keep these ladies in prayer as well as their ministries. I love you guys and I hope that you are blessed in a special and unexpected way this holiday season. "The grace of God be with you in Spirit, brothers" (Galatians 6:18).

**Kirston Angell, Nash**

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When I think about what it means to COMPLETE all four books in MasterLife, the word "Amazing" comes to mind. As I diligently studied the lessons daily, God's Word came alive to me. His Word began to point out all my flaws and revealed my fallen condition. At the center of MasterLife is the idea of mastering your life. How do you that one might ask? Through cultivating a relationship with God and spending time in fellowship with Him. John 15:5 says "I am the vine, you are the branches, he that abides in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing". Without spending time with Jesus, we are lost. When we fail in taking necessary time to fellowship with Jesus, we allow the enemy to creep back into our lives because we are disconnected from the vine.

MasterLife teaches that we truly can overcome the obstacles in our lives when we have fellowship with God, while remaining in His Word. God is calling first for men who will spend time in being useful for His purposes. Are you that person? I want to leave you brothers with this truth. No matter where you find yourself at today, God wants to use you for His glory. Will you let Him? He is faithful and He is waiting for you.

**Loren Hammonds, Nash**

## Never Went Away

When Christmas come around each year, I cannot help but reminisce about childhood memories of Christmas past. I had a family that made Christmas extra special. I have so many images I treasure; images of my Momma decorating the house while she played her old Christmas albums. I can almost taste the deer meat she cooked with her special gravy. And, oh I cherished laying on the floor under the Christmas tree and listen to her play the piano and sing carols. My Momma was the greatest mom; she worked hard to take care of us and make Christmas special – and she never went away!

My Dad worked protecting the world. At Christmas, I remember him dragging in a fresh cut tree, or a deer he just killed, or a load of firewood from the backyard. Then it was back to work. My Dad was a "Real Man". He worked hard to take care of us and make Christmas special – and he never went away!

My little brother was everywhere, and here and there, but he was always there for me. He always sometimes took the blame for me; he always gave me the biggest half of whatever we had to split between us; and he would give me his Christmas presents if I'd just come and play with him. My little brother was the best brother and he always made Christmas extra special – and he never went away!

We had a dog or two or ten, I had a lot of friends – and girls. Christmas was the most wonderful time of the year. Then I went away!

I went away to a far country, and wasted all I had, until I had nothing. I went away on a ship, in a storm I ran, drowning in sin, I was less than a man. I awoke in a pigpen or was it a jail cell; maybe the cold, dark, lonely belly of a whale. 3 days and 3 nights trapped behind fences, while eating pig food, I came to my senses. Broken by sin and life circumstances, I cried out to Jesus, The God of second chances (and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, Proverbs 24:16).

Lord, I am sorry, I've sinned, I'm not worthy of you, forgive me Lord Jesus, what would you have me do? Go to the convicts, share all you can, preach to them my gospel, tell them my plan. Remember Christmas with your mother, father and brother; what they did for you, now you do for others. Make Christmas special and be a real man; "take the blame", "give the biggest half", and "have fun"; with whoever you can.

Tell everybody, every single day; that I live in your heart, I will never go away!

**James Benoy, Nash**

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To all my family in Christ, more than anything, I wanted to be able to say thank you for all your love and support. There's no way I can fully express how much your love means to me. Thank you. I truly get to experience the love of Christ through all of you. I want to tell you about what happened in my life the weekend of March 16, 2019. There was a weekend event called "One Day With God" that was put on by Forgiven Ministries Inc. The ministry was founded by Scottie Barnes, and its primary purpose is reconciliation between children and their incarcerated parents. My 16-year-old daughter, Lydia, got to come down from New York state for the event. Before I tell you about our day together, I want to help you grasp how many miracles it took for this thing to happen for us.

I'll start with Lydia; she is my youngest daughter and was born almost 2 months premature. She had to be medevacked to Buffalo Children's Hospital immediately after she was born, because her lungs weren't fully developed, and she couldn't breathe. Two days later, my ex-wife, Emily, and I were told that Lydia wouldn't make it. Her body wasn't producing surfactant, which is the lubricant that keeps our lungs from sticking together when we breathe, and they had given her all the medicine they could. Emily and I were made to leave the NICU every night for a few hours so the doctors could do their shift change and everything. Emily talked to her parents that night, and her dad told her that he'd been praying, and God had told him that Lydia was going to make it. When we came back the next morning, Lydia was breathing on her own, was out from under the jaundice lights, and was ready to start eating (miracle). The doctors couldn't explain what happened. We took Lydia home from the hospital like 2 or 3 days later. That was when I truly started believing in God.

Another miracle involved in our day together is the fact that I am still alive and have been clean from drugs for almost 5 years. I became an alcoholic and drug addict at a very young age, and I'm pretty sure that I even overdosed once or twice. I tried everything (but Jesus) to get free of the drugs, but I never could; I was chained up tight and believed I would never be free. I was arrested and locked away (January 2008) for a terrible crime. By that time, I had hurt everyone I loved in my life and destroyed all of my relationships. Lydia was completely removed from my life, and rightly so at the time. I was no good for anyone. BUT GOD had been chasing me all that time, and when I couldn't run anymore, and I'd lost all hope in life, He

came in and saved me. It took some time, but things started changing in me, and they have continued to change in me ever since.

I started writing Lydia on a regular basis and continued that (except for a period of time when I thought I didn't have her address), and after about 7 years from the last time I'd communicated with her, I started receiving mail from her. God works so amazingly in children's hearts; it seemed Lydia was willing to allow me a place in her heart instantly. After 2 more years of writing her, praying a lot, and occasionally asking her mom, I was allowed to call her on the phone (That's 9 years without talking to her). Emily was able to start talking to me some, and over the course of the next year, I was able to talk to Lydia at least once or twice a week. In November of 2017, a Christian brother named Dewayne (an inmate) and his family helped pay for Emily and Lydia to make a trip down from New York for our first visit, the first time we'd seen one another in over 10 years. In case you missed it, that was a whole ton of miracles in what I just said. An INMATE paid for my family to come from NY to visit me! That doesn't happen. That is the power of the love of Jesus Christ. During that visit, I was able to build more connection with Lydia, and to ask for forgiveness from her and her mom, both of whom I had hurt a lot. Both were able to forgive me (miracle, especially considering what I put her mama through), and I was able to just pour love into Lydia as we sat there and talked, telling her how proud of her I am and how amazing she is (she really is an amazing

The next miracle has to do with the North Carolina Field Minister Program, and all the doors that God opened in order for me to end up here. Nobody in my family on the street would've ever thought in a million years that Johnnie (a.k.a. Tree) would end up going to college, much less a seminary to be trained as a minister. LOL! (miracle) So, God opened the doors for me to get here to Nash (which is not usually easy), He put me directly into the seminary block when I got here so that I could make friends there and start learning the material, He blessed me with several people who were willing to write recommendation letters for me from all over the place, and then He convinced them to let me in (miracles).

When I came here to Nash, I had nothing. No money and was not receiving help from the outside. I was given a promise from a fellow inmate who said that if I came here for the NCFMP and was accepted, that I wouldn't need to worry about finances while I was here. In the meantime, God just started

providing funds for phone calls from different places, showing me that He had me covered and that I was indeed where He wanted me. After I found out I was accepted and let everyone know, that inmate (JD) and his sister immediately began sending me funds for phone, stamps, and hygiene. (miracle) That money kept me in touch with my daughters when I would NOT have been able to otherwise, and that leads me to the most recent work of God in my life. Due to recent changes in policy, that help has been temporarily March 27, 2019 cut off, but I know that God is always working out His own plans, and I've learned that He can be trusted (that's a miracle for me, y'all, I've struggled with trusting people most of my life).

Several months ago, I knew that Forgiven Ministries was supposed to be coming here to Nash to do a One Day With God event, so I went and spoke with some of the brothers who are in the NCFMP with me, asking if they would be willing to help get Lydia down here for the event. Several guys (Dan, Craig, Benoy, and Tim) immediately jumped at the chance (in case you missed it, I'm talking about INMATES who didn't really know me yet); they told me to let them know when the time came. Well, the time was coming last October, and it was looking like things weren't going to work out on Lydia's end to be able to come down, but there was a hurricane, and that postponed the event until March of 2019 (Work God!) Four different brothers in Christ, along with Forgiven Ministries, all chipped in to pay for my princess to come down here and spend the day with me. God brought it all together, and it was a beautiful thing.

The day before our children came, we (the fathers) spent the day with the Forgiven Ministries crew learning about being a godly dad, packing bags of presents for our kids, and getting a workout in learning a fun little dance (thanks Bob!). We heard from former NFL player, Renaldo Wynn, about the huge impact his dad had on his life, and had the privilege of hearing Miss Scottie Barnes give her Powerful testimony, which I wish all of you could hear (3 or 4 fathers gave their lives to Christ afterward, including my friend, Darrell; Work God!). The next morning, we (the dads) got to hear a Powerful testimony (and original songs, which were amazing) from a young lady, Kayla, who told us how she spent most of her childhood with her dad in prison, the negative impact it had on her life, and how Jesus came into her life and saved her. It's hard to imagine the impression that young woman made; here we are, listening to this representative of all our children, telling us how much it matters

that we all step up and BE dads for our kids, even from in prison.

Then the kids were here, and it is heart wrenching seeing all these young'uns running across the gym to jump into their daddy's arms. Just seeing Lydia, and being able to wrap her up in a hug almost made me break down right there, but I was determined that I was going to make it through the day without crying (most of it anyway), because I didn't want to make her cry. We played a bunch of fun little games, running around in circles, popping balloons, etc. (An ingenious way to start the day, by the way), then we got to watch a youth pastor/magician do a pretty cool act. The most important part of this part to me, is that I got to sit there on the floor with this beautiful princess glued to my hip and holding my hand through the whole thing. I can't take my eyes off of her, because it's so amazing that she's here. After the magic show, we go eat pizza for lunch, and Lydia and I end up with a table by ourselves. (Work God! The volunteers who were assigned to us were SO great, giving us the space, we needed). After the pizza, we had birthday cake; the first birthday that Lydia and I have celebrated together since she was 3 years old. The whole time, we're talking and holding hands. Then, we got to take pictures together. We did some crafts together, and then we went to watch the professional juggler, who was absolutely amazing and hilarious. (Lydia and I really enjoyed him). Then they passed out some booklets with all kinds of questions for us to ask each other, which really got us talking. Next, Andrew asked for some kids and dads to stand up and say what the day meant to us. I had to, but when I got up there with the mic, I could barely talk, and cried through telling everyone "thank you," and most of all telling Lydia how much I love her and thanking her for wanting to come. Then it was time for the daddy daughter dance. Forgiven Ministries volunteers brought me a red rose to give to Lydia, and they started playing some slow music, and Lydia looks at me with this worried look, and says, "I don't know how to dance" She had never slowed danced before, so I got to be the first one to dance with her, and to show her how. For a dad who's missed almost all the "firsts," that was a HUGE deal. (Plus, I can cross 'Dance with a Princess' off my bucket list) We danced, and I talked to her throughout the dance, sharing with her how much I love her and how proud I am of having her as my daughter (did I mention that she's amazing?) More than anything, I just wanted her to know that I've loved her all along and that she is secure in my love; there's never a danger of her losing my love.

Next came the father/son walk, so we went to sit down and talked. Actually, we pretty much talked non-stop for the rest of the time; they brought out the gift bags and the pictures, but we were so busy talking that we didn't notice much else until they told us it was time to go. We walked outside together, holding our balloons, and after letting them all go up into the sky, we had to say our goodbyes. The whole day was absolutely amazing and getting dance with my princess will be one of the most treasured memories of my life.

To all those who were involved in any way, I wanted to say from the bottom of my heart, "Thank you!" Just remember that God is still in the business of doing miracles in this world, and He loves pouring out His love on His children. The prayers, love, financial support, and everything else that goes into Forgiven Ministries is not just creating one day for parents and their children to enjoy, it's impacting the lives of whole families; most importantly, it's showing off the love of Christ to watching world, that's how they know He's real and that we're His disciples. I pray Christ continues to shine in all of your lives, and that we all walk worthy of His calling. God bless y'all; you're in my prayers.

**Love, Your brother in Christ, John Brant, Nash**

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## Mastering Life On The Outside

Merry Christmas MasterLife family. Weston has been really on me to write something in this newsletter so this afternoon I am fulfilling his request. My name is Jon Daniel. Some of you know me personally as I sat where you now sit for over 6 years in North Carolina DPS. My stay there was nothing special in events other than my involvement in Master Life. I entered prison having lost everything in life both socially and financially. All relationships were gone I was alone. If there was ever a time in life where I had no options this was it. My faith in God was nonexistent and in many ways, I was skeptical of His even caring for me. I walked the yard you now occupy with little to no care in my life ever being a success again.

I came across Master Life at AMCI. I began to attend a morning group and work on letting God remove things that were in the way. I carried tremendous hatred for many events and people in life. This made it very hard for my heart to get right. God began to work on the small things in my life that I was willing to

let go. Staying focused on God was tough for me since I was used to being self-reliant. In many steps forward God revealed the person He wanted me to be. Was I ready for this then? No. It took coming back to finish my post release for me to give up my grip on how I wanted to do things.

I was released in March 4, 2018 almost two years ago and will never be back. It was good to finish the sentence. More than that it was good to leave prison with no real expectation of what I was going to do. I went straight to the train station waited 24 hours for the next train to Florida. When I got to Sarasota, I had 25 dollars or less in my pocket.

I entered a homeless shelter where I slept on the floor for 12 dollars a night. Taking it real slow I worked day labor jobs flagging traffic and stuff like that. I was helped by a Jewish group who assisted me in a deposit for an apartment and in late May I moved into an apartment. I just kept working and trusting that Gods got a plan. A week after moving into the apartment I began working my current job. I had no furniture, or dishes just a bed. I spent nights on the bed praying for God to do what he does best and change my situation.

During the summer God began putting people and things into my life that were good. In this summer I met my now wife Connie who is the best woman in the world for me. She has all the attributes that I need to have a great marriage with her. God knows who I am. He's got this. Connie brings with her a caring and loving warmth and it fills our marriage with security and respect. God could have given me any woman, but he chose Connie to walk with me and share to ups and downs of life.

There have been many financial blessings God has given me also. He has put an employer who is a Christian in my life. This person is a mentor who genuinely cares about my success and invests time in my life in areas not related to work. This job has given me financial means to bless others and my family in ways that are His. I truly have no financial worries most of the time. More signs of His plan.

In the environment you are now in many would say you can never have a good job again. You will never be financially capable again. God doesn't care. Your life is worthless. I live today a living proof that Gods got plans I never thought would happen in my life. Tomorrow Connie and I will have a contract secured on our first home. I NEVER thought this would happen in my life. I just thought I would have to put all of this in somebody else's name. Truth be told I

qualified without my wife in less than two years removed from prison with \$25.00 as my starting point. God can do anything. I believe he enjoys doing things we think are unachievable.

This Christmas I want you to know God has a plan. I'm nobody special I'm just me. In Gods eyes I am His and he controls it all if I allow Him to. There is no bigger fan of you than God. He is pulling every step of the way for you to do the right thing. He is cheering for you to get back up when you fall. He is your advocate and protector. He loves you. As you read this sitting on your bunk today rest assured your road has not ended. There are always paths yet untaken and plans unfulfilled. While you await the next step trust that God wants you to have a great life there and elsewhere. In my life God began giving me the small stuff to see how I would handle it. So, this is the best place to begin. Am I handling the small stuff God has placed in my life? Am I doing the next right thing? This could be as simple as a soup to the guy who is hungry and has nobody to help him 2 bunks down from you.



It is mine and Connie's hope that this Christmas begins with a trust in God for your life. He's got your best interest in mind, and He has a plan for you. It begins with the small stuff and moves to a greater fulfillment. Today Gods waiting on you. Always remember you are Gods choice. Chosen by Him. God cannot fail nor is He forgetful. He knows your wants and needs. He loves you. Merry Christmas!!

**JD**

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Greetings and blessings to all of you from Lili and I! Be encouraged saints because our God is with you and with us. So many temptations test your foundation in the Lord, and we know how you fight everyday against those dark forces. We battle out here too. But believe us when we tell you that God has not taken His eyes off you not even for a second. The world out here is at a new level of evil. It is truly anything goes out here in all areas. Sex, drugs, violence, corruption, disrespect, pride, selfishness, greed, lust, a distorted view of one's own God given gender and murderous rage is dominating society now. Lili and I have been through so much out here and we thank you for your prayers. Jesus heard you and we are absolutely sure the Lord took action and sent us help due to your prayers. We are also praying for all of you. Just a little while longer and the Lord will turn your struggles, pain, sorrow, loneliness into Joy! He is coming! Don't look at your circumstances. Look on Jesus! Now pick up that sword of the Spirit and keep that armor on. No demon or even satan himself can stand against you. Now go and do what warriors do. We fight.

**Walter Finley, released to do God's Will**

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Mrs. Rebecca Keeter-Lee, BA, MAT

PhD. Candidate 2021

Greetings and blessings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray that as you read this brief introduction that you will be enlightened and enriched with knowledge. I am providing a very brief testimony/history and will finish with a Biblical worldview perspective for your consideration.

I am Mrs. Rebecca Ann Keeter-Lee and I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior at the age of 10 years (ahem) I am now 52. So, for 42 years I have been a professed born-again Christian. Just like many others, there have been points in my life that I have not served our Creator as closely as I should. But our Creator's grace is sufficient, and He forgives our shortcomings. I have a wonderful husband, Andy, who supports me in all my endeavors, and I appreciate him very much. I am very excited to be a small part of the

MasterLife ministry and look forward to serving our Lord according to His will.

In 2005, I graduated with my BA in Psychology and in 2017 graduated with the MAT (Master's of Art in Teaching). Currently I serve as an English Language Arts and Literature teacher of youth ages 12 to 18 years. I am also completing my doctorate in Higher Educational Administration & Leadership at Liberty University. This Spring 2020, I will begin my dissertation research and writing and hope to defend my dissertation by the following Spring 2021. Prayers are always appreciated. The focus of my dissertation studies will be consisting of the post-secondary education of people who are incarcerated. My thesis is not yet concise, but I will gain more clarity through research.

I hope that this introduction will serve as a Segway for more opportunities to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Please read and reflect on the following Biblical perspective.

Biblical Worldview Perspective

Instruction was a term used in the Bible, for teaching and/or learning by the instruction of one to another. Our Creator provides us with several verses pertaining to the importance of both receiving instruction from others or delivering instruction to others. The following are verses that explain the emphasis that our Creator has provided to demonstrate that importance.

Proverbs 1:7 (KJ21) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:8 (KJ21) "My son, hear the instruction of a father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

Proverbs 4:13 (KJ21) "Hold fast to instruction, let not her go; keep her, for she is thy life."

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Merry Christmas! This is Travis. I am part of the group that makes the MasterLife Ministry, Inc function. I have included a bio and picture of Becky. She is the person that has developed and maintains the web site [www.MasterLife-Ministry.org](http://www.MasterLife-Ministry.org) and is doing a great job. Pass on to your family to check it out. We will be expanding it in the future with highlights, testimonies, pictures, etc.

If you have more testimonies and MasterLife experiences, please send them in, you are an important part of this newsletter, without you

there would be only a little content. Be sure to send them in by March 2020.



There is a special lady at First Baptist Church that gets these newsletters printed, Pat. I have included her picture. She works in the church and loves making things happen.

Also, Bequita and I are involved a lot in putting together, stuffing envelopes, stamps and all the stuff to get the newsletter out.



I could not forget Ken and Rachel for their efforts and work to get the newsletters out and typing and organization. This is their whole family. Their kids can be a hand full, especially the one is making a face in this picture.



**Prayers**

Inmates that are about to be released, their home plan, their spiritual connection in a local church, their God given purpose.

Webster Neumann - recuperation

MasterLife groups in every location, not for MasterLife but for the people that learn that they can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

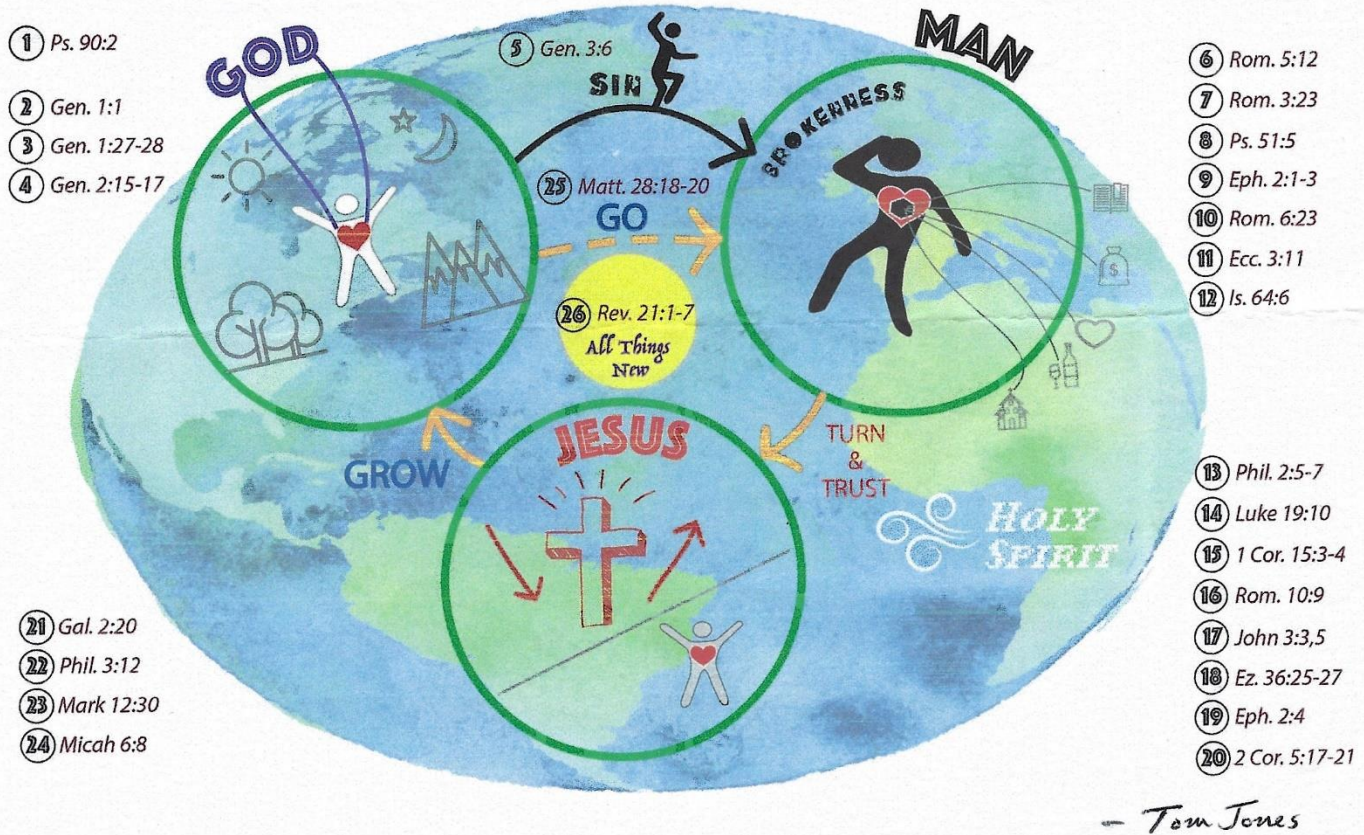


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Various scripture passages from KJV, NKJV, ESV, NASB, LIVING BIBLE, and others

The World Picture is from Tom Jones visually showing God's Plan of Redemption.

# God's Grand Plan to Redeem a People unto Himself



**Adopt-A Life** is designed to help support a "lifer" (someone doing a life sentence or a long sentence) in his ministry, in prison. Basically, you can be a co-laborer to him and an encourager through letters and some financial support. Be a Brother, Sister, Father, Mother to these men.

**MasterLife** teaches some very important skills for witnessing. It also teaches the men to start a relationship with Jesus without the religious hang-ups; it simplifies Christianity, and it creates an atmosphere that brings the church men and lost men together, thus tearing down barriers.

**Mastering life** in all areas of bible study, scripture memory, fellowship, witnessing, serving, behavior, relationships, the church, the community, the world.

**MASTERLIFE MINISTRY, INC.**  
[www.MasterLife-Ministry.org](http://www.MasterLife-Ministry.org)

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