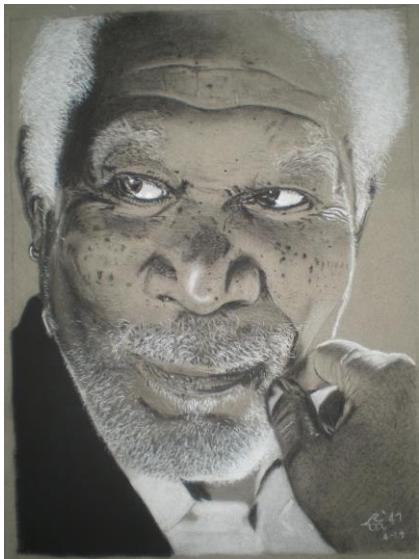


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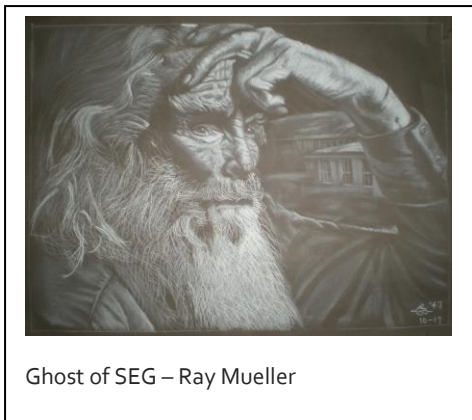


Morqan Freeman – Ray Mueller



The Gift – Kenny Whitley

MASTERING LIFE IN CHRIST



Ghost of SEG – Ray Mueller

**ART  
 INCREDIBLE**

We had 18 entrants and great pictures and even more comments from our group of judges. We appreciate so much your effort, your talent, your dedication to your art. The number 1 is "The Gift" by Kenneth Whitley, the number 2 is "Ghost of SEG" by Ray Mueller, and the number 3 is the "Morgan Freeman" by Ray Mueller.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!**

**RELATIONSHIP**

By Jeffrey Garner

Oftentimes I reflect back to my old self and how far God has brought me. I am currently enrolled in the North Carolina Field Minister Program (NCFMP) here at Nash. For the last three years since enrolling in the NCFMP, I have made excuse after excuse to not join in MasterLife. Now, I regret that I waited so long to be a part of MasterLife. Honestly, I thought I was "too spiritually mature" for MasterLife. I have since come to the realization that I was not as spiritually mature as I thought myself to be. MasterLife is for everyone regardless of what stage you feel yourself to be at in your spiritual journey. Since being in the NCFMP, I have studied so many different things: Theology, philosophy, world history, biblical Greek. You name it, we have studied it. However, all these classes did little to build my relationship with Christ and the Church. MasterLife shows men how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to know God's will for their lives. My group just finished the first book, The Disciple's Cross, and it was great. I got to see a group of men coming together to learn what it means to be a follower of Christ and to grow by fellowshiping with one another. Kyle, our discipleship group leader has a true passion for teaching

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others and is gifted at making the lessons practical and easily applicable to life. Jonathan, adds much needed questions that makes each member of the group to think critically and sparks up great conversations. DeeJay is the quiet one in the bunch, but when he does speak it is always meaningful. Don on the other hand, has great wisdom in spiritual matters which helps everyone grow in their understanding of God's will for their life. I feel honored and privileged to call each of these men my brother. I would like to thank each man in my group for helping

me grow spiritually. I cannot wait to see what book two: The Disciple's Personality has in store for us. I also want to give thanks to James Benoy and his group; Larry Doyle and his group; Fred Washington and Loren Hammonds and their groups for stepping out on faith and making disciples. Thanks for being an inspiration and offering me encouragement along the way as each group grows closer to God.



**Jeffrey Garner, Nash**

## THE LIVING GOSPEL

By Victor Velasquez Jimenez

Hello to all my brothers and sisters in Christ. My name is Victor Velasquez Jimenez, and I am a child of God. I would love to start my testimony by sharing to you the sinful life that I was living before I came to know the Lord Jesus: Our Savior, redeemer, our mentor, our Master, our hope and our Lord. I was living in rebellion, doing things my way—drugs, alcohol, and the gang life. The consequences? Prison with 19 to 25 years! I am in my thirteenth year of this sentence.

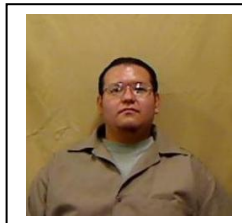
Many times, I thought to commit suicide and end my life. I was so broken because I was tired of the life I was living. But God never allowed me to put my thoughts into action. I am so grateful for that. Then I prayed to God to help me get to a place where I can leave my past and learn more about Him. HE moved me to Nash Correctional and surrounded me with brothers from the seminary program. Twenty-nine months ago, I gave my life to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was just like the "lost son" in Luke 15; I was lost but now I am found—praise God!

I am thankful with the brothers leading the MasterLife groups in the dorms, because without the books and the teachings of the brothers, I would not know what I know now. Three or four months after I came to Nash, I came to the unit where they have this MasterLife groups. I signed up to be in a group, and I begin to know more about Jesus and meet lots of new brothers. I am not going to lie to you, I loved the experience the fellowship and I have to be honest; I learned a lot. Like, what it means

to deny myself, and take up my cross, and follow Jesus daily (Luke 9:23). I learn how to use the Disciple's Cross; how to put Jesus in the center of my life, because He is the vine, and we are the branches and without Him we can do nothing. (Jn. 15:5). He is our fountain of power, the one keeping us, guiding us, and protecting us. I learn how to have a quiet time with the Master by being in His Word and holding to His teachings, teachings that are true (Jn. 8:31-32). If we remain in Him and His Word remains in us, we can ask Him whatever we wish and He will do it, if it is in according to His will (Jn. 15:7; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). We are to have fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ, so the world will know that we are His disciples by loving one another (Jn. 13:34-35). Our witness in these things brings glory to God and our fruit (Jn. 15:8). But the only way these things are possible is by keeping Jesus as the center of our lives; that's right, He must be our #1 priority always. Stay connected to Him because He is our foundation.

Since all of this started 29 months ago, I started co-leading a MasterLife group with my brother James Benoy. God used this to prepare me to go on the battlefield and teach others how to be a committed disciple of Jesus Christ. God is not sending me out empty, I have His Holy Spirit to help me (Jn. 15:16; 26-27; Matt. 28:19-20). Yes, now I am starting my own group, and to be sincere, I am really excited, but at the same time I have peace and confidence because I know that I am doing God's will and with what I learn from the Holy Spirit using MasterLife, I will be able to teach.

To God be the honor and glory, Amen. Keep me and my group in your prayers.



**Victor Velasquez Jimenez, Nash**

*Since this article was written, Victor has led his mother, Veronica, to salvation and is currently leading a MasterLife group in his dorm. Now that's the Living Gospel.*

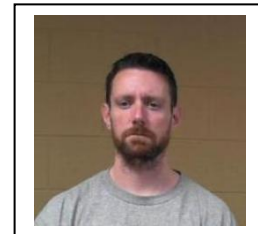
**MASTERLIFE – A DISCIPLE MAKING PROCESS**

## A LONG ROAD

By John Wimunc

Something is telling me to write. I don't understand why. These last few months have been hard on everybody and me. I have pulled away from God, the doubt of His existence, and other extrinsic factors have brought me down. Then I read the latest newsletter from MasterLife. I was in the MasterLife program at Alexander CI. It motivated me and gave me encouragement. Along the way, I have met some good guys that have participated in the program (MasterLife). My relationship with God has been up and down. The places I've been, have given me a different perspective on life and spirituality. War has had a terrible effect on me. The problem I have is, the information is in my head, the love is not 100% in my heart. The MasterLife program put love in my heart, with the fellowship and meetings. James Benoy was the teacher and I still remember a lot of what he taught us. Brian Crouch (Fish) has helped me in the past also. Every time there is a newsletter, I look to see what they have to say. The encouragement really helps.

Thanks for all you have done for us. It's been a long road. "Whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into



life, and few are finding it". (Matt 7:14 N.W.T.) I'm going to try and stay on the path. Thanks for the help.

**John Wimunc, Mountain View**

## TESTIMONIES

**ML-Team-Leader – Nash by Loren Hammonds**

Being a group leader for MasterLife takes a lot of responsibility. It entails leading by example. what better example than that of the Lord Jesus Christ? Leading others requires intercession for those whom you lead. praying each day that they will take seriously what Christ is calling them out of and into. which is a life of service, service where dying to self is required. Leading takes on a whole new meaning when

investing in a person's eternal life. Hence, whether they want to hear it or not, mentoring calls for speaking hard truths out of love. Why? Because their life is dependent upon it. Dying to self and taking up one's cross is not an easy task. However, this is what Jesus requires when following Him. It was a joy watching total strangers from different backgrounds come together for one cause, to learn how to make Jesus the center of their lives and to learn the Disciple's Cross illustration presented in the program. As the weeks went by, each member of the group became eager to share what God had said to them during their Quiet Time. This is the focus, spending time with the Master and making disciples for His glory.



by Loren Hammonds, Nash

### "Can an old dog learn new tricks?" by Fred Washington

To all fellow ML disciples and disciple-makers, it has been a pleasure to join the family of MasterLife Ministry. At sixty-seven years old, I did not expect much to change concerning my outlook on life or of my relationship with God; but, I stand corrected: MasterLife has changed my entire outlook on life and how I spend time with the Lord. For example, I have gone from a person who reads the Bible every once in a while, to eating it like it's my favorite ice cream.

Furthermore, it has become an enjoyment to fellowship with other believers on a daily basis, studying Gods Word together. In my dorm here at Nash correctional, there are approximately five ML groups taking place daily; and, as a result of the unity created by this program, the environment of the dorm has transformed from an aggressive and violent mentality to a peaceful and Godly environment. Praise God!

In all of my twenty-three years of incarceration, I have never witnessed anything like what an inmate-led ML group does for the souls of men and the environment of a dorm. It is a program designed to walk alongside a person as they come out of the world and into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus.

The Great Commission is at work in the NCDPS and MasterLife is one of God's #1 vessels in carrying it out. As for me, I've learned that an old dog can learn new tricks:-)



God bless, Fred Washington

### STARTING OVER By Robert Autry

I have been locked up since 1994, and been living a life of hate, envy, anger, greed, and jealousy; and that is all a sin-centered-life. Watching my Aunt Barbara taking care of me with visits, money, and shoes all of these years has made me want to love and care for others like her—She is a God-fearing lady. So, I started dabbling in God's Word and got saved. Well when you get saved in prison, a lot of times you have another inmate take you under his wing and teach you the way. So, I've been lost a long time. My dorm had heard rumors that they were going to move the seminary guys into our dorm. A lot of people didn't like that, but it made something inside of me happy. I was ready to be around some people who are more experienced in living for God. Maybe I can get my life on track. Well it happened and I'm glad it did. I've heard of this guy named Benoy for a long time, but I've never met him. Watching Benoy, I've noticed that not once or twice but every time I come up to him, he is always talking about something to do with serving the Lord. Watching my Aunt and now Benoy do so much for other people makes me that much more hungry for the Lord.



Well I've started a ML program with Benoy as my group leader.

Robert Autry, Nash

### JESUS LOVES YOU By Kenneth Clore

Brothers & Sisters, I first wanna give all praise and glory to God. Jesus loves us and He died for us. But a lot of people don't



The Trickster – Angell

realize that God don't love us because Jesus died for us. Christ died for us because God loves us. Before we were even created God loved us and He always will. See in the Old Testament starting with Adam and Eve, blood had to be shed to atone (cover) man's sin. Why? Because Man could not atone (cover) his own sin. That's the thing of it though, it only covered for the physical aspect of the sin, we as mankind as a whole still had to deal with the mental aspect, and the emotional aspect of it. So, all through the Old Testament you see man's sin being atoned for by the blood of animals. That is where Jesus who is God, and who became man took nails into His hands and feet said: while being hung on a cross, "You can't do enough on your own. You are sinful and you need to be forgiven." Brothers & Sisters in the Lord ... Why is Christ's death called, "The Darkest Moment in History?" it is because He who knew no sin became sin for us. It is because Jesus bore our sins and showed us exactly how much we matter to Him!!! Jesus Christ, embraced suffering, shame, sin, death, and hell. If we could gain eternal life by obeying the commandments; then why did Jesus bear all of our sin's past, present, and future? Why was He whipped until His flesh lay open? Why was He mocked, spat upon? Why if there was any way possible to save us, did he choose to claim His own and purchase eternal life for us and still got the same end result? Jesus even asked God the Father in Luke 22:42 "if there was any other way possible, to let that cup be taken away." But God made it very clear that no one would ever be able to uphold His law. So, Christ willingly chose to die on the cross for us. Jesus is saying from the cross

to us, "Stop trying. The price has been paid in full. I have done this of my own free will because I love you this much (with arms outstretched), because I'd rather die than live without you. You are the reason I died. That's how much I love you."



Beautiful Disaster – Angell

Brothers & Sisters, I used to not take my walk with Christ seriously. There was a point in my life where I thought it was a job. Boy, was I wrong, wrong, wrong? I was at a revival one week at church, when for about 8 months, God kept trying to get my attention. That Wednesday night, God got my attention really quick. I got up and took a short walk to the altar, not caring who saw me. I was tired of running from God. I knelt at the altar and gave it all one last final time. After I got up, I felt like a brand-new man. The weight I had been carrying on me fell off like chains. I haven't been the same since. I can honestly say that God has worked so many changes in me I lost count. The church I was attending around that time of my re-arrest isn't a church to me. It's home to me. The members there are my second family. I never felt more welcomed at a church than I did at Davis Baptist.



**Kenneth Clore, Avery Mitchell**

### RISING AGAIN

By Robert S. Harnett

I took MasterLife at Caledonia. I was given a life sentence at the age of 15 in 1990. My anger at God had me trying everything in prison. I just couldn't understand what kind of God would allow me to endure the

things I went through all my life. If God was love, why did I experience so much hate? Even as a child, I would preach to my family. I consistently read and spoke the word, but my life was a nightmare, no child should ever have to endure. I'm 46 years old now. And the person I am today is totally different, I hold on to the rope. Yes, I fall at times, but with God's strength I rise again. Nothing can separate me from the love of God. Currently, up for parole. And I know that is it. God has allowed me to see my release I ask that you pray for me and I will for you.

**Robert S. Harnett, Caledonia**

### GOD'S NOT DONE

By Alexander Johnson

I'll keep this as short as possible; I was on a destructive path. For 18 years, women, drugs, violence in my hometown, I thought I was the man till one day two officers put those cuffs on me. I found Christ in the county jail and I back slide for 4 years, I thank God for His grace. I should have been destroyed by God for the things I was doing. Then one day, a man of God named Rev. Michael Hunt walked up to me said, "Why don't you try Jesus Christ and be more serious about it this time?" and I did. Over the past 2-1/2 years I have been used by God to do so much. Touching



**Alexander Johnson, Harnett**

### GOD IS FAITHFUL

By John Reese

I am incarcerated in prison for ten years. I don't know where to begin my letter to y'all. I was so blessed by your newsletter after I read it, (Feb. 2020). It really moved me and showed me how God can work on men and women. The testimonies are what showed me this. I am writing to y'all to see how I can get involved with this ministry. I believe God put y'all in my path to help me to grow in Him a lot stronger. In May of 2014, God came to see me in a cell in Daytona Beach, Florida, and since then I have been walking with Him. I've had my ups and down days along the way,

but I have learned that God is faithful even when I am not. I know He is love and that He loved me so very much because He has shown me over and over how much He loves me by things that have happened along the way. It just amazes me just how good our God is and how much He has for us in our lives. I praise Him for this every day. Also, I would like to ask to see if y'all know any other ministries that help with



**Marion**

### THANKFUL

By Michael J. Johnson

I am thankful to be included in your newsletter. I have made numerous friends over the years while incarcerated. Some of these friendships will be lifelong and it pleases me to read about what some of them are doing and going through. I am encouraged by my friends who are involved with and are about to complete the Ministry program at Nash Correctional. I am grateful for their opportunity and I thank Joe Gibbs, Southeastern, Nash Administration, and DPS for seeing this vision through. Others will benefit from these warriors and I pray that each one, with God's leading, will continue to impact



**God Bless, Michael J. Johnson, Dan River Prison Work Farm**

### MY COMEBACK

By Joaquin Vasquez Melendez

I was born and raised in Caguas, Puerto Rico. I have one sister on my mother side and one sister and three brothers on my father side. I am 35 years old and I am currently serving a sentence of 12 to 19 years for crimes committed. I was married to a beautiful and amazing woman had

tools to help with studies like concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionaries and anything like that. Thank you very much.

Your brother in Christ, John Reese,

those around them. Travis, I thank you and the MasterLife family for making this possible. You are awesome!!! (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

three kids and two grandkids, but I destroyed that life and ruined their lives with my actions. I allowed the devil to use me to hurt the people I love the most, yes, my family. But God in his amazing love and grace came and visited me while I was in jail. When I lost everything, I mean everything, I gain something more valuable something that can't be measured with words. I gained my freedom which is only found through Jesus Christ my Savior. I couldn't believe it, you know, how somebody so filthy and broken could be noticed and better yet rescued. I always thought I am not worthy; I am a nobody but here I was being filled with love that I couldn't understand. It was then that it dawned on me that through it all God has never left my side, He was just waiting on me. Ever since I accepted him as my Lord and Savior my life did a complete turnaround. The life that I now live I live it through Christ who lives in me. What the devil used to bring me down God used it to bring me to places I never would have imagined. My setback was my set up for my come back.

There is so much more to tell about what God has done in my life that if I started writing them down, I could probably write a whole book. I'm grateful to him for loving me and forgiving me. My God our God is



awesome and if you don't believe me just give him a chance you won't regret it. I love you all God bless you all.

**Joaquin Vasquez Melendez, Nash**

**GOD IS IN THIS**  
By Jonathan Ramirez

God is in this, He is on this, He is doing something, and it is something Good ... it is difficult to accept the truth of this statement when a person has been sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole - that was My case. From the moment I received the result of my trial, my desire to live ended. An internal conflict flourished in my humanity that led me to declare war on God. So, I cursed him with all my heart, tore up my bible and swore I would never look for Him.

Once in prison, I looked for distractions that would help me make my time better.

For example, I played soccer, went to exercise, looked for a spiritual connection in different religions, spent my time drawing and doing business - none of that filled my inner emptiness. I got to the point of feeling lonely, empty, and miserable. However, God has engraved the need in our hearts and the spiritual lack that only He can fill. Saint Augustine once said, "Senior, you are our creator. Our hearts will never find Rest until they find Rest in you." (Confessions).

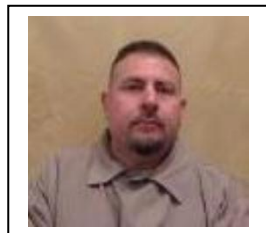
I felt that need, I knew that without God I could not continue my journey through life. One night in my bed, tired of life and prison, I cried out to God and told him these exact words - "God, if you exist, show me the way and help me to know and understand you, I'm tired and I want to die!" Incredible as it may seem a few weeks later, inmates with life sentences were summoned to a meeting in the chapel. There a new program was explained to us, we called it the Seminar. I remembered my plea a few days ago and said to myself— "This program was sent to me by God." But I had a problem ... my English was poor. Still, I took a risk and applied thinking that I would not be given the opportunity to be part of this program. To make a long story short, here I am in my third year nine months from earning my degree as a pastor. If I'm honest, this degree is not important, for me the important thing is that I was able to know the truth, I set myself free (John 8:32). Now that truth is what prompts me to serve our King — Jesus Christ — I want to proclaim that truth wherever I go. Today the statement, "God is in this, He is on this, He is doing something, and it is something Good" makes sense in my life because God used the negative in me to do something positive, not only in my life and in the life of my family, but also in the lives of many people in the prisons of North Carolina. The application and practice of all this



La Cartilla del Estudio - Ramirez

knowledge of God's Word is what made the difference. That is where MasterLife came in. As a disciple of Christ my authority is The Holy Bible because the Holy Word of God is the only one that changes lives. However, MasterLife is a complement that has helped me establish a closer relationship and communion with Jesus Christ. The basic principles that are employed in these books have helped me with the teaching and founding of a Victorious Christian life.

Simple principles such as: Christ as the center of our lives, time with the teacher, and our dependence on Christ have taught me that our change only comes through the relationship we have with our creator and the study of his Holy Word. I have also learned that the power of spiritual growth does not come from ourselves, nor from our efforts, our relationship with the Master is what transforms us spiritually. As a disciple of Christ, I am very motivated and wish to teach this model as a guide. Always and as a priority, showing that Jesus Christ is the definition and the supreme example of sacrifice, love, and



humility. My thoughts are to glorify and please my Savior by teaching, loving, and blessing all those people who wish to transform their lives.

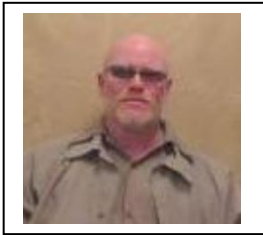
**Brother Jonathan Ramirez, Nash**

**GOD'S PLAN OR MINE?**  
By Larry Doyle

This was my second time leading a ML group, and the experience keeps getting better!

Allow me to give you a little background on the newest installment of MasterLife here at Nash. A few weeks before the NCFMP's fall semester began, sixteen seniors were moved to unit one. For me, this was good news, as I had previously (before COVID 19) led a weekly Bible study in the classroom on unit one. So, I eagerly moved with anticipation of starting the weekly Bible study (called "Bible Storying") up again, at least in the dorm. But little did I know that God had other plans, as He began to move upon the block to form four separate MasterLife groups. Upon seeing God move upon the lives of other brothers in the program, and upon the lives of the

men in the block, I had a choice to make. Was I going to continue with my plans, and tell God what I was going to do for Him? Or was I going to acknowledge where God was working, and get involved? I am so glad I got involved. It has been a blessing the last six weeks to work with these men. The Lord never ceases to amaze me as He brought to my memory, day after day, verses and life experiences that were relevant to the topic of that day's lesson. I am not sure what is ahead for me as a NC field minister, nor am I sure that MasterLife will be a permanent ministry for



me, or if God has other plans. What I am sure of is that MasterLife has had a lasting impact on me as a minister.

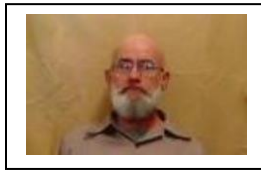
by **Larry Doyle, Nash**

**MASTERING LIFE EACH DAY**  
**JESUS AND YOU**

### **ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS**

By **Richard Constantineau**

Dear brethren, having recently completed MasterLife workbook #1, the Disciple's Cross, I feel much better equipped to properly handle the many dilemmas, concerns, and distractions this life hurls at me constantly. The most important decision to make each morning, even before my feet hit the floor, is for it to be my will to do God's will for that day. This is vital for me. My time with the Lord each morning is irreplaceable. Nothing even comes close. Quiet time with the Lord is absolutely essential for me to remain grounded in His Word, focused on Jesus, and to continue my spiritual journey towards maturity, each day striving to be more like Christ our Savior. For me, denying myself is, has, and likely will always be my biggest hurdle. Jesus rescued, recovered, and redirected me after eighteen years of bondage in prescription drug addiction. Learning to deny myself of what I want and to desire what God wants has been tough for me, but it does get easier each day. MasterLife has helped me focus more on Christ and less on myself. My prayer is for you to find a study group and get involved. Just as James 4:8 says, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

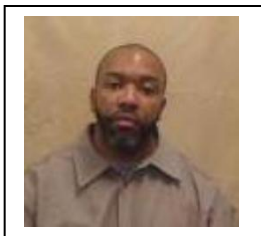


**God bless you, Richard**

**Constantineau, Nash**

### **BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION** by **Uri Small**

Friends, neighbors, and family in Christ, if there's one thing I must profess to you it is that social distancing has provided a great opportunity for me to learn and grow on MasterLife's program of teaching Jesus Christ discipleship. There have been no volunteers allowed in the facility due to the pandemic, which means I have not been able to attend DPS Bible studies or church services. However, I was blessed by brother James Benoy when he and other MasterLife friends started new discipleship groups. They announced to our whole block that all were welcome to sign up, so I agreed to participate in workbook one, the Disciple's Cross, led by Loren Hammonds and Fred Washington. For six weeks, Loren and Fred guided me in the biblical process of making disciples. Even though I've been a Christian for two years, I have never had it explained to me how Christ is actually made Master over a Christians life. However, during the last six weeks, this is what I've learned: if Christians do not intentionally build our foundation on the Word of Christ, we will be blown away by the world. Therefore, we must live in the Words of Christ by praying, fellowshiping, witnessing, and ministering as Christ commands; because apart from Him we can do nothing being connected to Christ helps me understand the significance of making Jesus the Master of my life and making disciples for Him. My experience with MasterLife's Disciple's Cross workbook has left me very



excited to continue with brother Benoy who will be teaching me book two: The Disciple's Personality.

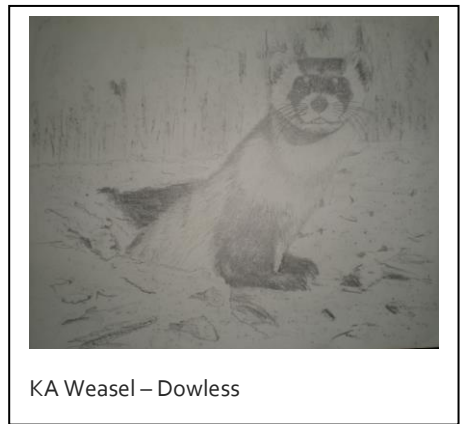
by **Uri Small, Nash**

### **MATURING IN CHRIST**

By **Don Edwards**

When I started the MasterLife workbook The Disciples Cross, I was already a born-again Christian. One thing I have learned, however, is that being a Christian is a life-long learning experience. I am so happy and excited about what I have learned while taking MasterLife. From where I use to be until now is a dramatic change because I have placed Christ Jesus at the center of my life. My relationship with Him has grown; also, my relationship with other Christians has grown as well. I have made a disciplined commitment to follow Christ, deny myself, and to take up my cross daily to follow Him (Luke 9:23). Without having the Word in my life—I am lost. Throughout the last six weeks, I have grown to minister the Gospel to others, witness to non-believers while still learning and maturing in Christ. My faith has increased tremendously, and I am now a bold soldier and a disciple of Christ Jesus. Amen!

**God Bless, Don Edwards, Nash**

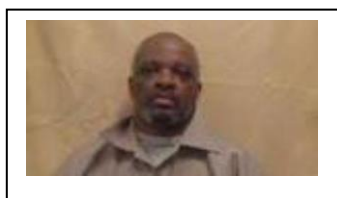


### **LEARNING TO PRAY**

By **Len Dejournette**

Hello to all my fellow MasterLife participants. This was my first time taking MasterLife. So, what did I learn during the last six weeks? Personally, I learned the three most important priorities of life is to focus solely on following Jesus Christ, while praying in faith, and loving those around us. Disciples need not to fear because, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim. 1:7 ESV). In workbook one, The Disciple's Cross, I learned how to have fellowship with God by asking Him for guidance to steer me in the right direction. Also, by placing my needs before God and bearing Spiritual fruit. I learned how to

pray intercessory prayers for the people in my family, and those who are of the household of faith. I pray to God daily asking Him to forgive me of my sins that I have committed and to bless my loved ones each day. Furthermore, I pray for those who are lost and have not yet established a relationship with Jesus Christ. I learned to keep praying in faith, trusting in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. The Disciple's Cross taught me how to have a quiet time with Him by living in the Word, praying in faith, fellowshiping with other believers, and how to witness to the world and minister to others. I am now able to fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. I learned about Jesus and what He did for me. MasterLife has truly saved my life and has given me good friends to fellowship with. In the meanwhile, take care and may God Bless!



**In Christ, Len Dejournette, Nash**

### **GOD GET'S THE GLORY** **By George Clowers**

Wow, how great is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? The brothers here at Nash have dedicated themselves to learning how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ through MLM, and have been faithful to showing up five days a week to fellowship together, memorize Scripture together, pray together, and attempt to apply the skills and tools each book presents with one another. The sincere genuine relationships we have in this group is a blessing from God. We tell each other what we are struggling with, what we're going through, and what we need prayer for. I do not like saying "my group" because I am no different from any of these wonderful men. I have just been through all four books before they have. These are my brothers in Christ, and I am honored to have each one of them in my life. We are about three weeks into book 3, and they have been faithful and eager to learn how to combat the Spiritual Warfare that goes on in their lives each and every day. Most of all, they are learning how God equips them with the

### **Where Your Life Truly Begins**

By John Reese

Since I was young all I've been told what this life was for.

Was to serve, praise and worship the God who also is the Lord.

But, it was always hard to be able to see, because the pain of life was always given to me, which stung the Honey bee.

It inflicted me with it seducing poison that cause me to become bitter, anger, and alone.

Trapped within myself all I felt was a numbness and overwhelming cold

So I started doing drugs to keep myself sedated

I was afraid to feel pain so satan told me it was cool to be faded

I started to hide from the pain by going as high I could go

But instead I flirted with death just so I could keep the pain stuff down below

By me being high on drugs kept me deceive as satan had me trapped

Until I met Jesus and learned on the cross He paid my rap

By hanging on that cross Jesus paid the cost for my sins

Then reach down He picked me up out of my mess and by my hair He led me in

To where now I am in the family of God and Jesus and me are Kin

So the meaning to life is to save praise and worship God in the End

And that my friend is Where your life truly begins!

armor of God, this allows them to defend themselves against the evil one.

I am so proud of this group of men who have been faithful to God and their group members. We have had some great conversations, learning moments, and teaching moments. This awesome group of men are faithful, men such as Ralph Gettys (aka Big's), Thomas Johnson, Thomas Wheeler, Michael Madrid, and Joshua Stroessenreuther. They have committed themselves to learning about one another and most of all knowing who

God is and what our purpose in life looks like as we follow Christ. As we go through these daily MasterLife studies, I find myself continuously learning more and more about how to make the lesson more relative to this prison environment. The Holy Spirit allows us to take these illustrations and make them relative to the situations in here, which ultimately glorifies Jesus Christ. I look forward to finishing book 4 and watching these men start their own MLM groups and continue the process of discipling others. I am very grateful to be a part of the MLM family and can't wait to watch how God works through each individual that has dedicated themselves to Jesus Christ through this ministry. These men here at Nash are working hard to share the Gospel through MLM, men such as James Benoy, Kyle Triplett, Reginald Clinton, Marcus Keys, Loren Hammonds, Tim Russel, Joaquin Melendez, and Fred Washington. Many of these men of God are also in Seminary;

wherein they sacrifice their time to instill in numerous lives. while having limited time to do their academic assignments during the present COVID-19 guidelines. I also want to thank God for all the men who have gone through MasterLife and dedicated themselves to the population here at Nash. Some of these men have not taken MasterLife but have continuously emulated Christlikeness through other ways of discipleship and Bible studies. These men love God and preach and teach the Word through their continuous

devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, men such as: Barry Mintz, Larry Doyle, Correy Price. Kelvin Smith, Jeff Gardner, Uri Small, Charles Young, Johnathan Simpkins, John Brant, Craig Williams, Isaac Timmons, Lucas Rash, Jesse Bracey, John Worthy, Stephon Goode, Jamar Springs, Anthony Smith, Ramirez, Dan Edwards, Dadi McNair, and Jose David Rodriguez Vasquez II. These aforementioned men spend their days and nights instilling in individual lives through Bible studies, teaching, and preaching. They continue to walk in faith and live their lives for Jesus Christ in an environment that constantly pushes back against faithful believers. God is using these men as vessels to incorporate change in the prison system. Most of these men have life sentences and are instilling in other men's lives to show them that there is another way they can live life, and this way is through **Jesus Christ**. Thank all of you for your dedication to MLM and instilling in men's lives through Bible studies and just being an ear when someone needs somebody to listen to them. God gets all the glory because without Him, none of this is possible. We are here to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20), and love one another (Jn. 15:12), and these men exemplify what it means to be followers of Christ. They don't just talk the talk; they walk the walk. MasterLife has changed my life, it has given me the skills and tools to cultivate a rich full relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I want to thank all the people in the MLM family inside these walls and outside these walls. I would like to thank the people who make this letter possible, Walt, Lili, Travis, Bequita, Ms. Mary, Rebecca, Rachel and Ken, Pat, Mr. Otis, and Mr. Matt. Without these men and women of God, this letter would not be possible. We love that all of you are doing the Lord's Will through this ministry, may God bless every individual within this ministry. God works wonders in the lives of those who faithfully depend upon Him, and how He provides us with His everlasting sustenance.



**George Clowers Jr., Nash**

**MASTERLIFE – CROSS,  
PERSONALITY, MISSION**

## PROMISED GOD

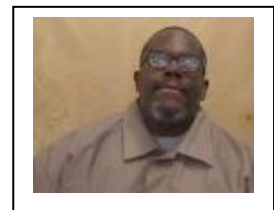
**By Ralph Gettys (a.k.a. Big's)**

I have been participating in a MasterLife group led by George Clowers for about four months now. We have finished Books 1 & 2, and we are in week three of Book 3. I will begin by sharing my testimony with my fellow MasterLife newsletter family. My life and attitude were bonkers before I truly allowed Christ to enter my life. Before I came to prison, I chased every desire my flesh had to offer. Many of my close friends even nicknamed me "Satan." Even when I first came to prison, I allowed this environment to keep me chained to the same fleshly desires that drove me on the outside. Internally I was horrible person, but externally I would give people the perception that I had it all together. People never viewed me as a bad person, but I hid the evil that was in my heart very well. The lusts of the flesh and pride of life fueled my every desire. I was a wolf in sheep's clothing. I dressed nice, not ghetto but civilized, I wore little nerdy glasses, always smiled, and took care of my people. Like Satan, I had a very subtle approach about my disguise. An old man once told me that the biggest trick Satan ever did was to get people to believe that he never existed. This is the lifestyle I lived, and never really knew what I was capable of doing until it was too late.

I was raised in the church, a PK to be exact. Word was the preacher's kids are the worst kind. I sat thru countless sermons every week but never really understood what they were talking about. My mother and others were preachers at my church, I knew the name Jesus was spoken a lot but never understood the power behind the name. At the age of fifteen, I left the church and became my own man because I did not want to adhere to mom's rules. I'm sure you all know how that goes, if you can't follow the rules you have to get out. So, like the rest of my mother's siblings, I was going to be my own boss. I remember one of my mom's friends telling me that "God's going to use you Lewis." I thought to myself, "yeah right, you truly don't know me, and I wish you would quit talking to me so I can go do my own thing." You could say, I was hell on wheels at that time. The street life consumed me, I was selling drugs, using drugs, robbing people, and flexing people.

My life was Satan's playground, until I got caught up in a robbery in 1998. I sat in jail for 18 months, the DA was trying to give me 210 months as a first-time offender. This was the first time I heard God speak to me through reading His Word. I couldn't recall the verse, but it said that "no one can judge you but God," or something to that affect. I knew right then that I was going home, and I **promised** God if He got me out of trouble, I would serve Him with all my heart. I was let go and I forgot about that promise immediately. Yeah, **I LIED!!!**

In 2012, I found myself back in jail with no possible way out unless God intervened with a miracle. I cried out to God and my spirit remembered that lie I told God all those years ago, but God had a plan for my life, and He was going to hold me to my promise. At that very moment, I realized that I needed to rededicate my life to Christ. I looked back on my life and recognized that it wasn't as glamorous as my pride had me believing. I feel like I have done everything there was to do in life and I was still sad. I had this void in my life that couldn't be filled by anything except God. I hit my rock bottom; my spirit was drained. God's vibrant Spirit echoed in my head, "you still haven't tried Me." This awakened my spirit to submit to the Holy Spirit and I have been serving God ever since. Now that I have tasted that the Lord is gracious, I can't get enough of Him. Likewise, Peter asserts, "where would I go?" I know where I came from, where I've been, and where I am headed now. The Word of God states that "better days



are yet ahead." I'm still a work in progress, but I thank God I'm not where I use to be. Blessed be to God!

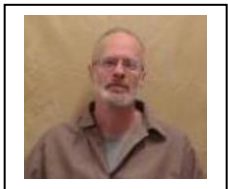
**Your brother, Ralph Gettys, Nash**

## LIFE

I was raised in a very strict, yet loving Christian home, with our daily life revolving around regular weekly church services. My dad was a US Air Force veteran, who had never left the NC mountains, prior to boot-camp. My mom was of Pennsylvania-Dutch descent, commonly known as the Amish-



Mennonite people. Between the two I was raised in an ultra-conservative home. However, I rebelled against the faith, family, and God and was living a life of sin. Until I was arrested for assaulting the man I found with my live-in girlfriend. Ten days later he died, and I was charged with first-degree premeditated murder. The state was seeking the death penalty against me, but God offered me life...life everlasting for turning to Him. In humble gratitude I turned my life over to God. I have been locked up for over eleven years now and have a love for studying God's Word that I didn't have as a youth in church. Although I am very active in doing Bible studies, participate in church services on the Unit, and graduate from NC Field Minister Program next May, I didn't have a structured daily devotional plan until taking the MasterLife group study. The MasterLife course teaches believers to take the next step in their Christian walk, seeking first the Kingdom of God, while living a cross-centered life. This Biblically structured course teaches believers to take the daily devotional life seriously. I am grateful for the lessons learned and applied. In closing, I would like to say that I am at the most, guilty of second-degree murder, at the least manslaughter. However, I can honestly say that if I had gotten only the 3 to 4 years for manslaughter, then I would not have



**Charles A. "Tony" Ball, Nash**

## NIGHTMARE?

By Thomas Wheeler

Time—a non-spacious continuum of irreversible moments. Once a moment passes, it is gone forever. Every thought, word, and action that you expend in a single moment can never be undone. Furthermore, each moment is etched in the annals of time. The sum total of those moments will become the record of your life. As I review each godless thought, word, and action throughout my life, they play out like the movie, "Nightmare on Elm Street," one long frightening dream. My parents divorced when I was sixteen years old, my moment of liberation, so I thought. It was just the beginning of my fall. I lost my father when I was 19 years



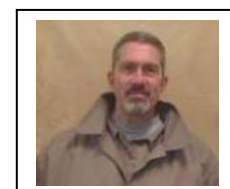
Mixed Fruit – Dowless

old, which destroyed me. His death solidified my liberation. In my lowest moment, the world reached out and embraced me. It became my surrogate parent and taught me how to love everything but God. Hindsight reveals a life without love, hope, or peace. I existed for one purpose—self, and I became really good at it. However, in September 2002, my liberation came to an immediate halt. My surrogate parent cast me out and imprisoned me for life. I lost everything: my life, my family and friends, freedom, money, possessions, reputation, position in society, dignity, and so much more. I sat in a tiny jail cell, an empty vessel. Many of you reading this letter know exactly what I am talking about. Our stories may differ a little; however, the results are always the same—destruction!

In September of 2002, while sitting on the edge of my bunk, a voice spoke into my heart, "come to me." I did not recognize the voice as anything more than my guilty conscience still tormenting my soul; however, I thought to myself, "where was I supposed to go?" I knew I was not crazy, so I reasoned it to be something other than myself. Then, the voice spoke a second time, "come to me." This time the voice compelled me to drop to my knees and then upon my face—completely prostrate on the floor of my cell. I was not raised in the church; therefore, I did not know what to do; however, my submission to the voice was sufficient, because my spirit knew exactly what to do on its own. God came into my life in a discernable way and He took over. He opened my stony heart and began to pour in His love—WOW! My spirit knew exactly how to respond, and it was amazing. I surrendered to Jesus Christ that day, and though I still came to prison, I did so as a free man. I met the Truth and He made me free (John 8:32 KJV). I will be honest with you all, my walk in the beginning was a little shaky. It took a few years for me to find my legs and learn how to walk in the

footsteps of Jesus, but once I learned how to follow Him, I was able to take off running. "So, run!" (1 Corinthians 9:24). The Lord Jesus Christ has been carrying me ever since.

Today, as I write these words (19 years with the Lord), I am a sophomore in the North Carolina Field Ministry Program (NCFMP) at Nash Correctional Institution. My journey in Christ is surreal. I still have to pinch myself (so to speak) to make sure I am not dreaming. My life is now Spirit led and ministry driven. I am currently active in the MasterLife Program while going to school. MasterLife, through the power of Christ in me, has helped me to better understand how to effectively disciple others. MasterLife's easy to follow program is rich with scriptural content and well-crafted illustrations, such as the Disciple's Cross. MasterLife brings the Word of God to life through its comprehensive teachings about God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. MasterLife brings into view the necessity of Christian community and the importance of nurturing the citizens of that community through fellowship. I applaud MasterLife's founder, Avery T. Willis Jr., for kindling a fire for Christ that burns in the hearts of so many believers, I thank the many MLM supporters (too many to name) who continue to stoke this great fire for Christ with love through prayer. Your support is felt and manifested in each lesson I review. As I finished book two of the MasterLife Program, day 5 said it all, "A Disciple Indeed." May God bless the MasterLife family with the unspeakable riches of Jesus Christ and may the many disciples of this program in every facility throughout North Carolina, unite together in one Spirit to praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with one voice. Everyone who reads these words, find a MasterLife program near you and get involved. You will not regret it. Brothers and sisters in Christ, make every moment count as though it is your last. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 2: 7), because God is speaking! Peace be unto you all and remember these two things: God loves you and I am praying for you.

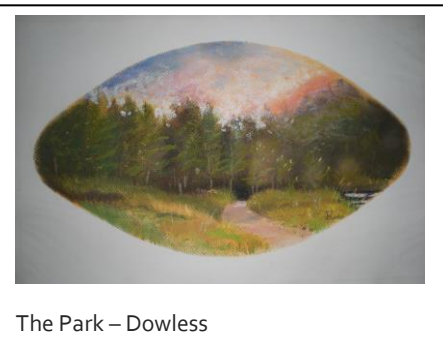


**Your brother in Christ, Thomas Wheeler, Nash**

## GROWING

By Kyle Triplett

I just want to start by praising the Lord Jesus Christ for everything because without Him, I would not be able to do anything (John 15:5). As a MasterLife group leader, God has placed men that are faithful and hungry for the Word into my path once again. I want to express my gratitude to my co-laborer in the faith and MasterLife: Jeff Garner. I also want to thank Len Dejournette and Don Edwards for allowing me to sow into their life. Also, to Rabbit who joined the group and was later moved to a different housing unit. What an honor it has been to get to know these gentlemen and to grow in the Word alongside them. Every time I take part in MasterLife, it is as if I find myself growing just as much as the men who are in the group with me. First, by keeping Christ at the center of my life and staying in the



The Park – Dowless

Word helps me grow in my relationship with the Lord. Secondly, by spending time in prayer and letting my request be known to the Lord (Col. 4:2; 1 Tim. 2:1-8). Most people are under the assumption that following Jesus is easy. The message of Jesus is easy enough, right? Just recognize you are a great sinner. See that you are in need of a Savior—Jesus Christ. Not only recognize who Jesus was, but what He did for sinners like us. Jesus gave Himself freely to die the death that each one of us deserves, so that we could have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Therefore, Jesus has set the captives free by believing in Him because "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Paul states, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" because "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:9, 12). God has truly blessed me even though I am in

prison. I am proud to boast that I am an Ambassador of Christ (Eph. 6:20). God is using my imprisonment as a means to declare the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). God wants each and every one of us to Master Life so we ourselves can participate in sharing the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ. One of the greatest tools for sharing the gospel is our testimony. The apostle Paul repeatedly used his testimony to bring glory to God. Therefore, I encourage each and every one to share with someone else what God has done in their life. Till next time, may all those who participated in MasterLife continually "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18).



Change is possible inside these walls, but only by trusting in Jesus and being saturated in the Word—is this change possible.

In Christ, Kyle Triplett, Nash

## TIMES LIKE THIS

By Tim Jones

It is always an honor to be able to proclaim that the Lord is a present help in my time of need and I have the assurance that the Holy Spirit will always be my comforter and lead me to the truth... This is Brother Tim at Anson Correctional and I, like the rest of the country, are dealing with the effects of the COVID virus staying safe seems to be the concerns of most people. Of course, it's times like this that gives us as Christians the perfect platform to shine as lights to the world because we have been blessed with the knowledge that there is only sure safety in Jesus alone. We have the responsibility as true disciples of Jesus to share this blessed hope with all who will listen, and I think we can all see many people are now willing to do just that "listen"! It has been through the study of the Word of God and my involvement with the MasterLife discipleship program that my relationship with the Lord has been truly realized as my dependency on Jesus is made clear. Without Him (Jesus) I can do nothing but with Him I can bring forth much fruit. Through personal daily trials and continual battles, I have learned to

trust more and more in the ability of the Holy Spirit and to see one through to the victory. Seeing how the Lord honors his Word and truly knowing for myself that the Word of God is true, allows me to be able to step out in confidence as I seek to disciple others. So, MasterLife has been a very important tool that the Lord continues to use to strengthen my relationship with Him as it keeps me searching the scriptures that all leads me straight to Him. I truly thank God for everything He has allowed to come my way that has led me to the relationship I now have with Him, because there is an absolutely nothing that could ever separate me from God's love now or ever!

God is good all the time, Brother Tim, Anson



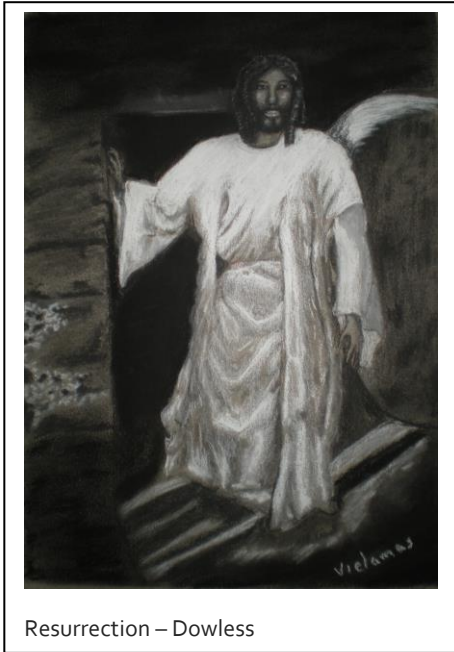
Butter Cup – Dowless

## A Skunk Lesson

By Tim Jones

This was supposed to be an article about the spiritual illumination given to me, of a changed life with a clean heart. Using my observation of a skunk and the lessons learned, as an analogy. But during the writing of that article, I was actually faced with a situation that demonstrated the issues I was communicating so I decided to come from another angle with this article. I am at Anson Correctional, and here we share the yard with several skunks that are not shy about making it known that they belong here. And they have no intention of leaving 😊. I love the animals, so I've had a lot of pleasant days watching these skunks live out their lives, and a lot has been learned that I never knew before about them. Skunks are really very beautiful animals arrayed with fur color combinations that even King Solomon

would envy. They are very social animals, and they appear to be void of a mischief nature. I've been told that they even make wonderful pets, if their scent sacks are removed from them. Now, most of us would never even consider having a skunk for a pet under any circumstances, because everything we have ever heard or



Resurrection – Dowless

seen in the past relating to a skunk has always been bad. Just the mere thought of a skunk gets a very negative reaction from most people as they remember the toxic smells, that they have inhaled at some point from a skunk that had sprayed his scent to ward off dangers from predators. I probably would have thought the same way as most people about skunks had I not had the opportunity to witness for myself, their behavior in a non-threatening environment. But just like these skunks that will never be free of the stigma that makes people view them in a threatening and negative way. Many of us will carry the same stigma, because of our past. We can clean up our life on the surface and make ourselves look as beautiful as the fur color combination their coats are arrayed with, but the stench of our past sins will remain in the memory of others until we can prove ourselves clean from the inside out. This process of proving a clean heart is often the most frustrating times of our Christian journey because a lot of times, our outside does not match up with our inside. I'm sure many of us can understand what Paul meant when he said in Romans 7:21. "I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me" and how he felt when he went on to say, "oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from

the body of this death" Roman 7:24. And his answer, "I Thank God through Jesus Christ" Romans 7:25. Paul understood that conflict between inside and outside of men, and even Jesus himself told us that "the Spirit was indeed willing, but the flesh is weak" Mark 14:38. So we know that there is a real conflict, that takes place in the souls of all of us, the way we deal with this conflict within us truly makes all the difference in our witness to the world. Recognition of this conflict gives us the platform to accept the only solution to the conflict, and that is the Grace of God. Just like the skunk can never get away from the stigma that makes people view it as undesirable we too can never get away from the pull of sin on our lives. Every skunk is born with a gentle nature, but also born with the capability to produce a toxic nature, when threatened, which makes me think of man's dual nature, only a skunk that has had its scent sack removed becomes completely harmless and incapable of acting in a manner that brings fear to others. And it is only then that his insides will match the beauty of his outsides. Just like men that have been saved, it is only when we have had our sin nature removed that we become completely incapable of sinning, and our insides will match our outsides in perfection. We look forward to that day when we have been changed from mortal into immortality, and are clothed in our new glorified bodies, and are able to rejoice being free from all aspects of sin including the very presence of it. But until that day comes, and we remain clothed in this body of flesh that is prone to sin, we will be known as sinners. As the skunk has learned to control the toxic nature within itself and maintain its gentle nature, about 98% of the time, it reminds me of our definition of meekness (power under control). And it is meekness, that we must allow to operate in our lives as we deal with a dual nature. Every day we are reminded that we have not yet reached perfection, and we fall short of God's glory. We sometimes get really confused and frustrated because what we truly desire to do for God's glory is the opposite of what our life looks like. I mean, when disappointments come, or something happens that makes us mad, we truly want to glorify God in how we handle it. But there is an old sin nature that sometimes rises to the surface just like a skunk tail raising before he sprays a toxic scent. We must be aware that this can surface in any of us, no matter how beautiful our fur color combination looks on the outside. But we have an advocate in Jesus who knows all

about our battles, and he has given us a comforter, in the Holy Spirit that will guide us through it all. So, don't be discouraged and take a lesson from the skunk and don't present a toxic nature, just because you can, use meekness.



Tim Jones, Anson

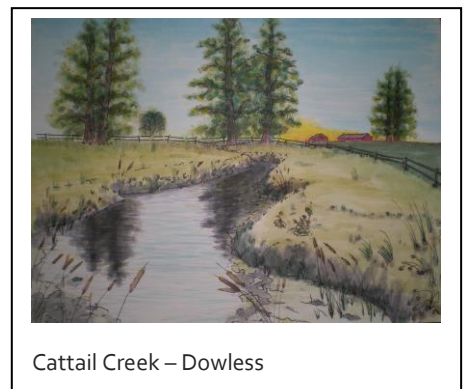
"This article is being reprinted due to structural revisions that have been made for clarity."

## **MASTERING LIFE IN PRISON**

**by James Benoy, Nash**

### **Strongholds & Worldview**

In chapter one of *Mastering Life in Prison*, which was printed in our February issue, we discussed the idea of "change." That lesson brought us to the realization that we all desire to have a change of some kind in our lives, amen? Furthermore, we have tried many ways to achieve this change without any lasting success. No amount of money, sex, drugs, food, TV, or even a three-hundred-pound bench press can satisfy or fulfill us—we seem to be left wanting more change. This leaves us frustrated, asking ourselves the question, "why?" "Why can't I change!?" The answer is, there is something blocking us from the change we desire—our thinking!



Cattail Creek – Dowless

### **The Barrier is Blocking**

Picture this: you place a Barracuda fish in an aquarium, putting some fish-food on one side of the aquarium and the fish on the other side, then place a glass partition separating the fish from the food; the fish can see the food, but he cannot get to it because the path is blocked. The

Barracuda will swim back and forth towards that food, over and over again only to bump into the glass petition. The amazing thing about this story is that after a few days you can remove the petition and the fish will never change the pattern that has been set in his mind. The fish is stuck in a habit with no way out. Long after the petition is gone something is still blocking him, the fish is stuck—back and forth, back, and forth. Eventually, if someone does not rescue him and retrain his thinking, he will die from starvation.

In this illustration, one can easily see what was blocking the fish from the food; however, our question is, what is blocking us from getting the food we need, the food that will bring change to our lives? The Bible identifies these blockers, as "strongholds." What is a stronghold? A stronghold is a fortress with walls of protection surrounding it. It is a place that people barricade themselves inside, a place that cannot be penetrate by outside forces. The Word of God defines strongholds, "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy **strongholds**. We destroy **arguments** and every **lofty opinion** raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5 ESV). Strongholds are arguments and opinions. Avery Willis defines a stronghold as "an idea, a thought process, a habit, or an addiction through which Satan has set up occupancy in your life—a place where he has the advantage (Willis, Avery T. 1999. Disciples Personality workbook 2. LifeWay Press)".

We will identify two categories of strongholds—personal and ideological—and focus primarily on the ideological. *Personal Strongholds* are areas where one struggles with personal sin in the areas of desires, cravings and habits of the flesh, for instance: cussing, smoking cigarettes, drugs, drinking, pornography, lying, manipulating, gossiping, fighting and so on. These are personal cravings or habits of the flesh. *Ideological strongholds* deal with the area of one's thinking, belief system, and worldview—how one views the world in which they live.

So, what does this have to do with the fact that I need change in my life? In the prison system, there are strong opinions about Christianity, jailhouse conversion, and when one should seek Christ. Many do not believe in crying to God when they get into trouble, others believe that they need to change first, while still others believe that they must wait until they get out to get saved. These are false belief system—strongholds. As a result of these

strongholds, incarcerated men and women are not able to be free from *personal strongholds* like drug addiction or get the change that they need to stay out of prison.

Many persons in prison recognize that they suffer with *personal strongholds*, but do not realize the core of their problems lie in their *ideological* strongholds. They believe that if they could just learn to overcome their personal strongholds they would be rehabilitated, and all would be well. These men and women spend a lot of time seeking out programs and treatments in an attempt to medicate the problem, never realizing that without Jesus Christ, they are only putting a Band-Aid on the problem. These men and women need to have their *thinking* corrected, they need to be taught how to overcome their ideological strongholds. But, before this can happen, they need to come to the realization that they are in fact victims of ideological strongholds. Once one is able to recognize that they have faulty belief systems/worldviews, they are able to search for the truth [Jesus Christ] who will make them free; free to change. Tearing down ideological strongholds will bring a natural ability to tear down the personal strongholds that we have sought to be rid of. A change of thinking, will result in a change of behavior (repentance).

### Ideological Strongholds

*Ideological strongholds* deal with the area of one's thinking, belief system, and worldview— how one views the world in which they live. This concerns the idea of what is right and wrong, what is truth, what is real, and so on. When one says or hears statements that begin with, "I think" or "I feel," they are sharing a glimpse of their ideological beliefs. Everyone has an ideological belief system or worldview, whether they know it or not. The incarcerated have different terminology for this, we call them creeds, convict-codes, constitutions, or knowledge. There are belief systems within the prisons, moral codes that everyone believes they must live by in order to survive. Some examples of this are "keeping it real to the game", "representing", being "one-hundred", or "doing what I gotta do." These catch phrases represent ideological strongholds that influence the way one sees life and the world around them. The questions posited to everyone is: What is really real? How do we know? What are our beliefs based upon? Where did we get our facts? Were they accurate? Could we be wrong?

In these sections we will explore some of our ideological strongholds and their origins.



Best Time of my Life - Pierce

### Recognizing and identifying ideological strongholds

The question arises, where do these ideological strongholds come from? Humanity lies under the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 Jn. 5:19). Satan has sets up barriers in our minds by creating belief systems, belief systems that come from information and influences in one's life. How did this happen? Jesus announces the problem, "you reject the commandment of God in order to establish **your traditions**, thus making void the word of God by **your tradition** that you have handed down, and many such things you do" (Mk. 7:7-9,13).

Applying this to our context, our beliefs are formed by the **information** that shapes our perception of things, information that has been taught and handed down by very influential persons in our lives. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, teachers, preachers, politicians, news anchors, actors, sports figures, commercials, convicts, homeboys, and many others. These people have strong opinions and firm beliefs about most any subject known to mankind. They present ideas to us, often with no evidence to support their claims; but, because of their particular influence in our lives, we believed them. It is sad to say, but, even after many of these influential people have long been removed from our lives, we are still stuck believing

the things that have been taught to us. Just like the fish, we are stuck swimming back and forth in our own ideological thinking, blocked from the truth. The purpose of this section is to present readers with many ideas, ideas that will cause one to reflect on their individual beliefs, where those beliefs came from, and are they based on fact.

### REFLECT:

Think about the reason people buy a \$200 pair of shoes instead of a forty-dollar pair of shoes or one brand of toothpaste over another. Why are some people democrats while others are republican? Why are some people racist's and others not? Somebody has influenced them: a famous idol, a television advertisement, peer pressure, or culture. Whether it's discussing which is truly the best brand of toothpaste and tennis shoes, or more important issues such as abortion, homosexual marriage, racism, socialism/communism/capitalism. The issue underlying one's stance on these beliefs is: where did you get them? When confronted by this question, one finds that many things they believe as absolute truths have no more basis than, "cause my momma said so" or "that's the way I was raised to believe." These things are often flippantly glossed over with statements such as "Oh, he is just stuck in his ways." These answers may be sufficient when choosing a pair of shoes or one's choice of toothpaste brand, however, other ideological beliefs can have life changing consequences for an individual or an entire nation. For example: haven't the teachers and textbooks determined what people believe about history, science, economics,



Bengal Tiger – Dowless

and sexual identity? Of course, they have. The science books continue to teach Darwinism as fact long after it has been proven "grossly distorted" by numerous credible scientists (Strobel, Lee. 2004. The Case for a Creator. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan). Socialism has proven faulty,

yet it is taught as a credible economical philosophy in many major universities. Even history has been distorted depending on the lens one chooses to look through. Some questions that we must ponder are: Have the scientists had an influence on how we believe the universe came into being? Do we believe that man came from monkeys? Does the FDA or a favorite health magazine influence what we consider healthy to eat? How many times have the facts been changed? There are other types of things that have influenced people throughout the past: cannibalism, suicide bombers, child brides, sexual identity, just to name a few.

### PRISON CONTEXT:

In all prison systems, there are certain words that will provoke an instant fight. In North Carolina, "Water-head" is the worst word you call someone to challenge them. This word could easily get you stabbed. In Texas, the word "hoe" is an instant fighting word. Well, when I was in Texas Department Criminal Justice, I was sharing with the guys what "water-head" meant in North Carolina. They laughed and mocked at such a silly word. Likewise, when I came back to North Carolina DPS I shared with the guys about the word "hoe" in Texas and they laughed. Yet, men are stabbing one another over such words. Who taught these ideas to these men?

I was in jail with an eighteen-year-old young man who had shot and killed a guy that he grew up with. When I asked him why he killed the other guy he said, "I represent west-side and he represents east-side." This young man is doing a life-sentence for the west-side of a town that no one has ever heard of. Where did he get his strong opinion of the "west-side?" I bet those west-side homeboys ain't writing him or holding him down while he's in prison. In fact, I know they are not!

This brings more questions to the surface: could you have been taught wrong? Could your values be misplaced? What is the truth? Is Jesus, right? Have we rejected the truth of God's Word and listened to handed-down ideas of man? One thing that is a fact: we deserve to know the truth! Hopefully, as we move through this material, we will draw closer and closer to the truth.

### Perceptions: God, Others, Self

We also have ideas about God, other people, and ourselves that have been distorted. There was a guy who tried convincing me that everything was created by aliens; I've listened as someone gives a

dishonest description of another person; but, one of the most hilarious things is to watch someone who perceives themselves as something they are not. Like an ugly dude who thinks he's good looking. How about the guy who thinks he's really doing it big cause he's hustling lots of Ramen noodles and postage stamps in the penitentiary? Our misperception of God, others and ourselves can blind us from the truth, the truth that could change the course of our lives for the better or the worst.

### Perception of God

Who is God? What does He look like? How does He think? Is he like a communist dictator? do what I say or die! Is He a teacher? He gives the lessons; you do the assignments, take the tests, and get the degree. Is He a boss? If you do your job right you get paid, but if you don't measure up, you're fired! Is he a cellmate? He stays on his side of the room and you stay on your side. Is he a hangout buddy, a convict-gangsta-respect thang who knows your heart? Everything is all good, yall cool. Or could He be a spouse? For rich or poor, through good times and bad, through sickness and health, until death do you part. These are rhetorical questions designed to stir up one's thinking. We are not going to discuss other gods or religions. These answers are yours; these are your personal perceptions. After you have answered them, ask yourself, "where did I get this idea from?" and "could I be wrong?"

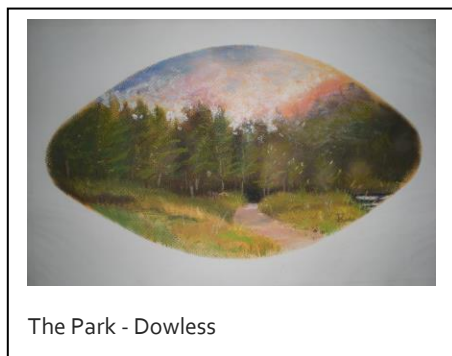


Glory Canyon - Dowless

### Perception of others

People can have distorted perceptions of one another. There is a wide range of things that contribute to the way in which one person perceives another. The reason our perceptions of one another are different is because of our belief systems and the information we receive about others. Information can be misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misrepresented. The point to be made is

that we are often mistaken about other people.



Let's look at some of the perceptions of Christians in the prison system. Think about that for a moment. They are labeled as weak, soft, fake, scared, punks, snitches, "can't handle it"; some are called con-men, trying to get a meal ticket or a free ride out of prison, and many other names. Where did these perceptions come from? These ideas come from information that has been handed down, information that has created wrong perceptions. In taking this idea a little further, I pose the question, why would anybody in their right mind continue to attend church in prison knowing that these are the labels they must wear? Have any of you thugs and convicts ever thought about that? These Christians have basically become targets behind the walls, targets for predators, extortionists, fights, mockery, and persecutions; furthermore, they are lied on, hated on, and gossiped about by fellow cons and staff members alike. Who allows themselves to be treated this way? Maybe it is possible that these men have found something? Maybe this Jesus thing is really real? Maybe these men have found somethings that has taken the pain away, the shame, the guilt, the hate, the bitterness, the loneliness. Maybe they have found something that has given them love, joy, peace, patience, and forgiveness. Maybe they have found something that has brought that "change" we have been discussing. And they don't care what people say about them or do to them.

This reminds of this girl in school that no one wanted to go out with—Tanya. I wasn't really interested in her either, besides, I was busy chasing after a girl who didn't want anything to do with me. But Tanya and I happened to stop at the same store every day after school. Eventually, we began to talk to each other and after some time I realized that I really loved this girl. No, I didn't go on to marry

her, but once I fell for her, I strutted around the school with her, not caring what anybody said or thought about me. She was "my girl" now, and she brought happiness to my life!

Likewise, these jailhouse Christians have found something that has given them something we all want: happiness, peace, love, and a changed life! A change of mind that results in a change of behavior. This is found in Jesus Christ. When you love someone, you do not care what people say or do to you, all that matters, is pleasing the one you love. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19).

Because of the false perceptions of jailhouse Christians most inmates will never take the time to think about questions like these. They have formed strong opinions and firm beliefs based off of the information they have heard from other convicts. These distorted perceptions of others have blocked them from the changes they desire.

Are there people that you could be wrong about? I know my penitentiary belief system, false information, and influential people caused me to be wrong about someone. When I was in close-custody prison, I met a man they called "Country." He was a great big hillbilly type. I always saw him at church, and he was always smiling. He also played volleyball really good. He became my friend and always came to talk to me and even helped influence the unit manager to give me a job. One day, when I was sitting at chow with some of my popular, well-respected, hard-core, super-tough, super cool-guy convict, gangsta, thug "friends," one of them told me that they don't hang out with no child molesters. Of course, I said, "Yeah, me neither." And that's when another guy says, "well, that guy "Country" that your hanging out with molested his own three-year-old daughter!" What do you think I did with that information? After my perception was changed towards him, I stop associating with him, I slandered and gossiped about him, and hated him. He went from friend to enemy with one piece of information that I was persuaded to believe. Well, later "Country" went back to court and his case was overturned and he was found innocent of the charges. After 15 years of prison and mistreatment from false information, he was freed. I was given an opportunity to tell him that I was sorry for judging him and slandering his name. He easily forgave me and said that he had grown used to it. Country was released from prison, and I learned a valuable

lesson: I can easily be persuaded to think and act a certain way by the information that influences my life belief system. I wonder how many friends and blessings I have missed out on by these kinds of devilish persuasions.

Our perception of others is manipulated by the information that we receive, information taught to us by influential people that we trust. Teachers, textbooks, media outlets, family, friends, homeboys, can put a barrier in our minds, a barrier that can block us from the truth about other people. The word of God tells us that we are all on level ground, meaning, we are all sinners in need of a savior, and we are not to judge one another, but leave all judgement to God who judges righteously. This has been designed for us to understand how easily influenced we are in our perceptions of others. We should examine ourselves and ask: could I be wrong in my perception of that person?



### Perceptions of self

Even our perception of ourselves can be distorted. One may believe that he is a good person, while another thinks they are a nasty, no good, worthless person. Still, others have the perception that life is a game, and they are the master of the game. Have you ever sat in the dayroom and watched the guy who thinks everybody fears him or respects him because he belongs to the little rascal club, the peanut gang, or because he controls the TV schedule? He walks around with an "S" on his chest like he's superman, thinking that he is running something, like he is in charge. What is your perception of this guy? Are you afraid of him? Do you laugh at him? Is his perception of himself the same as your perception? Or is his perception of himself somewhat distorted? What about the guy who allows others to physically and verbally abuse him, what is

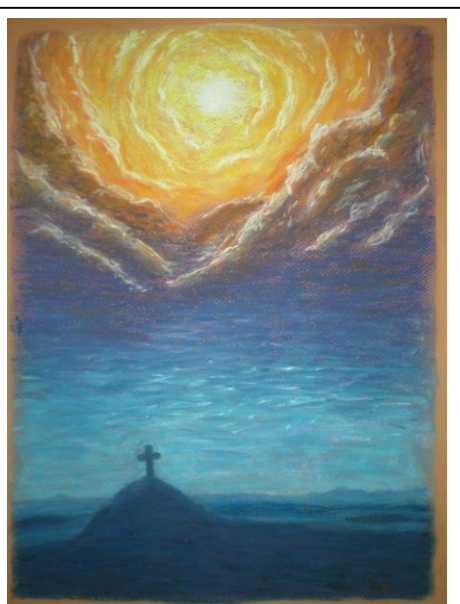
his perception of himself? We have men who abuse themselves with drugs, others who will not take showers or brush their teeth, some who are angry and hate themselves. Whether one's perception of themselves are full of pride or shame and guilt, the fact remains, that at the end of the day, every one of us in these prisons are wearing the same clothes; we are wearing another man's recycled boxer shorts and socks. We are all on level ground. We are broken men in need of change/repentance/Jesus, and our perception of ourselves are contributing to blocking us from what we need.

Could these men's perception of themselves contribute to their life problems? In light of this thought process, what does Jesus think of these men? Are you a super-tough-alpha-male gangsta-convict who thinks he's got the game all figured out? Are you a person who has given up on ever having a successful life, a life of stability, love, joy, peace, forgiveness, and freedom from your personal strongholds? Who are you really? What is the truth? Everything can change for you right now. You can get honest and become the *real you* and learn how to have the life God designed you to have, the life that you deserve. Nobody's going to perceive you any different than they already do, the world is not going to put a spotlight on you because you have decided to get real. Jesus is putting a spotlight on your heart right now and is revealing the truth to you in an attempt to pull down the ideological strongholds in your life and free you from the game and a life of sin. So, take off the mask brother and become a brand-new person, the game ain't real anyway!

### Prison perceptions, strongholds, and worldviews

Up to this point, we have reasoned with one another: we have concluded that we would like lasting change to come in our lives, however, we have strongholds preventing us from getting the change that we desire. A lot of the information and influences in our lives have led us to believe things about God, others, and ourselves that are not true. The world, flesh, and the devil have set up shop in our minds. Information that was taught to us by influential people has helped shape our perceptions, perceptions that have become ideological strongholds in our lives. These strongholds keep us swimming back and forth like a fish in a bowl—stuck in faulty worldviews. Being wrong about others can create life changing circumstances, being wrong

about one's self can cause terrible setbacks in life; but, if one is wrong about Jesus and jailhouse Christianity there are eternal consequences, consequences that not only effect one's personal life and



Rash – Light of Glory

eternity, but husbands, wives, and children as well.

Prison is a world of its own, a world with influential voices that determine what is believed as truth. They say things like: I don't believe in jailhouse religion, you weren't going to church on the street so you ain't supposed to go in here, or I will get my life right with God when I get out, I got more respect for God than to go crying to Him when I get in trouble. Still others believe that they are too rotten for God to love them. Though these ideas sound good enough on the yard, they are not rooted in any facts; instead, they are based off of handed down prison philosophies. They are based on what, "I think" or "I feel." And just like the fish, we are swimming back and forth, back, and forth, back, and forth, not ever realizing that the food is right in front of us. If these presentations have helped you escape from the stronghold that Satan has set up in your mind and you are now willing to let someone in, we would like to introduce you to Jesus. He wants to come into your heart as your Lord and transform your life by renewing your thinking; thus, you will experience the changes that you have so desperately desired. For now, would you pray a simple prayer asking God to *reveal Himself* to you and give you assurance that Jesus and jailhouse Christianity is truly the solution to your problems? Jailhouse Christianity is the way, the truth,

and the life—Jesus brings lasting change! Whoever told you different has set up an ideological stronghold in your life; and, you have barricaded yourself inside of this false ideology. I know because I was this person for fifteen years of my incarceration.

### Exercise: Did I hear that right?

Now we understand that we all have worldviews, worldviews that have been developed by information and influences in our lives. We have determined that we could have distorted perceptions as a result of how this information was presented to us. Now let's have some fun that will illustrate how easily we can get our information twisted.

This exercise must be done with a partner: Below are seven questions. As you ask these questions, the other person should respond with the first answer that comes to mind.

1. How many of each animal did Moses have on the Ark? (Moses didn't have any animals on the Ark, Noah did!)
2. What do you call the raised print that deaf people use to read? (Deaf people do not use brail, blind people do!)
3. Can you ever end a sentence with the word "the"? (yes, I just did)
4. Spell SHOP. (wait on response then immediately ask next question) What do you do at a green light? No, you GO!
5. At noon, if the big hand is on the three, and the little hand is on the five, what time is it? (No, it is noon!)
6. Spell SILK... (wait on response then immediately ask next question) What do cows drink? No, cows drink water.
7. Last one, okay this is easy: you are driving a train and you have thirty passengers on the train. At the first stop, twenty passengers get off. How many passengers do you have left on the train? Right, ten! What is the name of the conductor of the train? (It's your name; you are driving the train!)
8. Did you miss any? It is easy to hear something wrong isn't it? Or not pay attention to a key word in someone's statement. One key word can change our entire belief system.



James Benoy, Nash

## TIME WITH TIM

### We Need A National Heart Transplant

There has been so much social unrest in this country this past year, and it has undoubtedly touched all of us in one way or another. Black or white, rich, or poor, saved, or unsaved, bound or free, we have all had our bout with this country's social issues. I am sure everyone has their own views and opinion concerning it all, but the only view that truly matters is God's view! So many of us are seeing a race problem in this country and I'd be remiss to deny the fact that the enemy has used race as one method to keep the world's focus off Jesus, but the real problem is sin! If the devil can keep us focused on each other and begin to stroke some of the ideology strongholds that many of us have yet to walk in deliverance from, then he can keep us fighting and hating each other instead of fighting the spiritual battle the Lord has instructed us to fight. I know when we constantly see people being victimized and killed by those that have sworn to protect them, and then we constantly see lawlessness and civil unrest taking place as a result of these events; done as a way to protest unjust acts, it becomes very difficult to think spiritually no matter which side of the street you find yourself standing on. But God is still God, and He changes not, so His instruction to all those that have chosen to follow Him is still the same. No matter how bad the circumstances appear to be in this country or what method the devil uses to sow discord, division, or ungodliness, God has made it clear the way we should handle it. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God says "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land". Right and wrong is determined by God, and as followers of Jesus we must learn and obey the will of God and live our lives full of hope and trust in Him alone. Our nation's problems will not be solved by one political party or the other, and our racial, economic, or moral divides will not be bridged or solved without a national heart transplant. As the psalmist prayed, "create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me", so too must this country cry out for a heart transplant before real change can occur. As Christians, we must remember that living

in an anti-Christ filled society directed by spiritual wickedness in high places, we are the minority. So we will have to be an example to the world in standing up for truth, calling sin, sin, and making known right and wrong according to God's will, most often doing all of this against the popular opinions and views of those around us. It's really sad to see all that's happening in our country right now, but we are not surprised by it, because we have been told throughout the Word of God that times like these would come. We have been told to be the light in the world and salt of the earth, giving hope to the hopeless and lifting up the name of Jesus to the world. In 2 Chron. 7:14 God talks to the people called by His name (which we know to be believers) and instructs



Dowless - Seagull

them how to live before the world to make a difference, so I would encourage all of us to obey God rather than man. We all may be saddened by the sinful events that has snowballed into great social divide and civil unrest and lawlessness, and we can all have opinions about it, but the only way for us to be standing on the side of right and truth when the smoke clears, is to know the will of God and do the will of God. Our faith, hope, and trust are in the Lord, and we must reflect this truth to the world no matter what is taking place around us. Let us pray for our political leaders no matter if we agree with their leadership or not, because this is the will of God that we pray for them. Let us respect authority and give them what is due them, so that we may live at peace according to the Word of God. Let us cry loud and speak not about all injustices and those that try to sow discord regardless of the methods used. We are disciples of Jesus, and He has shown us the way to live in a sinful,

hate filled world. He has filled us with the Holy Spirit to lead and direct our path. Now we must be true ambassadors of the Kingdom of God and glorify God in all we do. Until our country gets a heart transplant and will look to God for themselves, we are all they have. So, let's make sure they see and hear the ways of God in us, instead of our own ways, thoughts, and opinions. Things may very well get worse before it gets better for this country as people's hearts grow colder and hatred becomes a driving force for many. I am a witness that "love will cover a multitude of sin", so no matter how the world feels or what the majority of this country does, I personally will seek to put the love of God in my heart on display for all to see, because its only in the love of God that salvation can be found. Stand on God's side and you'll find peace even in this social decay we currently are witnessing.



Stay prayerful and keep trusting in the Lord for He is still in control.

God bless you all and love to everyone from the Brothers here at Anson and me.

**Brother Tim Jones, Anson**

### How Much Longer?

By Dominique Perry

Breaking News ... virus milestone 200,000 deaths, Breaking News ... curfew enforced ... Breaking News 3 million acres consumed by wildfire, Breaking News ... Breaking News ... Breaking News ... pain, pleasure, protests, pillaging, pandemics. The state of our nation, the world, and the ensuing chaos, panic, and confusion. Swaying opinion and injustice running wild. How much longer? How much longer must we endure?

Where do we go in all this? As Christians, what guidance, do we have? How do we withstand the chaos and suffering that threatens to take us under? Contrary to popular Christian culture, where the mandate has risen, that when we become Christians, everything will get better in the world, prosperity is promised to you, if you claim it, suffering shall end and everything will be alright. Not going too far into it, though as Christians we do enjoy happiness and comforts, prosperity, and pleasure, but this is not always the case.



Not all Christians experience any of these. Though at times, it comes and goes like the wind, but in essence, the life of a Christian may be hardship. Is it due to a lack of faith, or failing to claim the promises of God? What of a Christian who honors God, loves the Brotherhood, to the end of time yet experienced but few fleeting pleasures of happiness? Has the Christian failed to respond in faith to God?

I realize every day is a battle, a fight to survive. The threat, always looms over us to destroy us in many ways. My brothers, we must fight. We must step out and speak out together. Unifying with each other in building up Christ's Church, building up our community in proclaiming his Gospel, Jesus calls us to be battle ready, staying alert in all circumstances, (Luke 12: 35-40) persevering to the end. To push back the forces of evil, to break the bonds of sin, the addictions, drugs, homosexuality, destructive ideas that daily try to suppress the glory of God; Christ gives us some principles on daily looking to Him and picking up our cross from Luke 9:23.

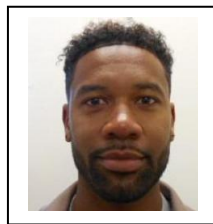
The Recall of False Religion and Culture  
Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (Luke 12:16). Watch and pray... stay dressed and ready for action, PERSEVERE. I imagine that it would come a time in our life where it is hard, chaos erupts and confusion blurs the lines. Jesus knew that the going would get tough. He knew the suffering, would be long, and the pain, intense. He set the example, yet he also asked the question before us, "How much longer must we endure this?"

The call to remember God and His faithfulness and proclaim His gospel!

"...fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows... And when they bring you into the synagogues and before magistrates and powers, take no thought how or what thing, you shall answer or what you shall say, (Luke 12:6-12).

At a time of my life, it seemed like there was a battle like I never battled before. I buckled under its pressure and succumbed to the cares of this life. I thought at one time I had it together. I thought at one time because of my learning, who would tell me more, especially in this environment (such big headdress) who else is fighting this fight with me. Gravely, I was wrong, though, through my pride, I became isolated (pity parties) I failed to

stay in the fight because I failed to see what the gospel is: God justifying sinners, God's goodness proclaimed in darkness and through the devastating actions, I saw darkness, I truly saw my need for God. At the height of Christ's sufferings on the cross, Jesus sounded with a trumpet, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken Me" (Matthew 27:46). As it says some thought he was calling for Elijah and one thought to go and help with giving him some "pain meds", (Matthew 27:34, 48). For Jesus it was a proclamation of ultimate endurance and victory (portions taken from Wayne Grudem Systematic Theology on Atonement). It was the pain of the cross that Jesus bore the penalty for our sin. No one suffered with him. He suffered the pain alone. He felt the wrath of God and His presence (Hebrews 10:31; 12:21, 28-29) for us. So, what was Jesus saying, "Matthew 27:46" in the light of facing the full displeasure of God? The question does



not mean, "Why have you left me forever, for he knew he was leaving (John 14:28; 16:10, 17) knew he would rise again (John 2:19; Luke 18:33) Jesus knew.

**Dominique Perry, Harnett**  
.....  
**Hello, Brothers!**  
**By Lili and Walt**

Walt and I and the MasterLife team appreciate the way you write us and share your personal struggles and triumphs with us. We are sending you all a puzzle to complete. The devil is at work in and out of prison. Avoid his tricks that he puts before you. "For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12.

If you have a problem with one of your Christian brothers do not allow your flesh, your pride, or the devil from preventing you from making things right. Whether you are a group leader, a student, or not yet a member of the MasterLife program, you are commanded by God that if you offend your brother to make things right again. Walking past your brother as if he does not exist is wrong. Resist the temptation of pretending that you do not need that brother. We are all parts of the body of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Continue to seek God in all ways and do not try to do things on your own. Lean on His grace and have faith that He is working all things for your good. Make Prayer a priority and see how your life changes for the better. He loves when we communicate with Him. Jesus would wake up very early and pray to God the Father. Let's follow His example.

Please share this letter with other Christians in your group or in your block that may not have received this letter. Tell them that we love them just as much as we love you but due to limited stamps, we could not reach out to everyone separately.

Walt and I and the MasterLife team pray that you have a great thanksgiving and a safe month.

**God bless you all, Lili and Walt**  
.....

Thank God you all are doing what you're doing. You give people hope and a sense of belonging. I asked God one day to help me be a better man and help me spread His word. Out of nowhere in the mail came the Disciple's Cross book with a commission from God to teach others as well as learn myself. I started preaching and teaching and my growth and the growth of those around me took off! God has sent so many people my way even a Muslim. Over the course of 3 weeks he



and at that moment I knew MasterLife was powerful stuff. My walk with Christ is so much better thanks to God and MasterLife.

**Love, AJ, Harnett**  
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**Depending on Christ During COVID By James Kelliher**

As COVID-19 rapidly spreads its sickness and death throughout my dorm, there is nothing worldly to depend on: Not the Correctional staff, not Medical staff, nor any Free-world help. That which the world scoffs at – Jesus, the cross, the Gospel – becomes paramount in these days as it leads to the only One who is truly dependable: Christ. Only Jesus can provide hope in that which is promised, salvation. here is from whence the wise are proven foolish (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

I spent nearly 20 years beating my head on a brick wall of a broken system, leaving me jaded and exhausted. My efforts could be zeroed in on the state's response to my current plight but no one is completely dependable in a broken world full of broken people; every human lets someone down and I am no different, so my perception is narrowing to what can I do - right now - to reveal who lives in me to others. Thrice, my co-laborers and I have tried to put a MasterLife group down (still miss ya Rob Zom) to no avail. Our backyard Bible study has been COVID-ed. I have been isolated from my study guide group. But I labor where I am in his name.

Laboring is as simple as "can I pray for you?" Learning that though I have a mouth it should remain shut unless it's furthering the cause of Christ (especially with staff!),

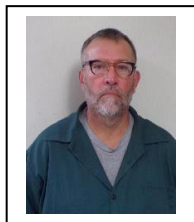


and acts of kindness. Stay prayed up! Stay the course my Bros in 1÷2, the beginning is nearing!

**Love always - James Kelliher, Pender**

It has been a joy to grow in God's grace with you all. As I look back, I can see where God has had his hand on me protecting me. Growing up on a farm in rural Ohio my father was an alcoholic and my mother a passive Christian. I knew of a God, one who punished the wicked (we were all wicked). I was so terrified that I was on my way to hell that I guess I tried to hide from God. At 12 I thought I gave my life to God but I'm pretty sure that was just fire insurance. For the next 30 years I did what was right in my own eyes. I thought I had learned how to be a man in the Marine Corp, but I was just a grown child. I met and married a woman in Okinawa that I didn't know or love and brought her stateside. I had no idea how to love her or her children because I didn't know what love was. In June of 2002 with me being so miserable, not knowing I did so, I called out to God. He was waiting for me and He answered. The Creator of the universe plucked me out of the world and put me in a safe secure place where I could hear His voice. I heard him on 15 December 2002 and submitted my life to him. I'm now coming up on the end of my 18th year with Jesus and I couldn't be happier. I have met so many brothers in here, but I must say that Weston Benoy had the most impact on me, he is truly a disciple of God. MasterLife has helped me focus on what is important and what needs

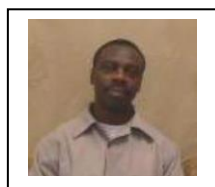
to be set aside. As we again start with book 1 here at Catawba, pray we can grow our brothers in the Word. There really is no better way live our lives except in Jesus.



**Sincerely,  
Kenneth "Ray" Lawson, Catawba**

**CALLED FROM DARKNESS  
By Stephon Goode**

God the Father called me out of darkness into the light of His dear Son Jesus the Christ. Filling and sealing me with His Holy Spirit. This happened sixteen years ago. I was in seminary college studying to become a NC Field Minister, when the academics began to take precedence in my life. Since I was always learning about the ideas and concepts of God, I failed to continue in the basics of having a relationship with God through Jesus. God began to press on my Spirit to join small group. There were brothers teaching and learning Avery T. Willis Jr's MasterLife, so I joined. James Benoy has taken the basics of the disciples cross and helped me to see how I had allowed school to consume my time through illustrating the simplicity and truth of keeping Jesus as the center of all things while staying connected to Him. It was in "quiet time" that I began to rekindle the relationship and experience the joy of growing in Christ. God who is faithful and



**by Stephon Goode, Nash**

**Why MasterLife?**

**By Christopher Phipps**

I pray all the brothers and sisters of the body of Christ Jesus are doing well and keeping faith and who we love and worship and serve! We are living in some of the craziest times I've ever witnessed in my 39 years on earth! So much has happened, it seems to keep happening in regards of this coronavirus, hate filled riots in the ongoing race war and to the nonsense killings by the ones we're supposed to trust in upholding the law. The devil has been busy, but God is still in control! Jesus

foretold and prophesied about all that's happening! So, my prayer isn't to be a selfish one where I pray for protection but for His will to be done and not our own will!

I just finished the first book the Disciple's Cross and I'm learning so much! I absolutely love the study format. I look forward to Part 2 study book the Disciple's Personality. I've been studying it while I've been in my wilderness journey alone in my cell while doing an I-Con segregation and I hope it's in God's will to start a group study real soon! My I-Con term is up, I'm just waiting to go to Modified Housing but all movement within the prison has been put on hold because of an outbreak of COVID-19! Over 600 inmates have tested positive here at Scotland. But I'm taking this time to learn and study Jesus Christ better and listen to His plan for my life. I'm memorizing scripture and thanks to the Disciple's Cross I've learned 7 verses that will help me stay connected to the Vine! John 15:5 is now my favorite! Basic instructions to abide in Christ!!

Continue to pray for all Christians who truly and faithfully live and serve Christ! Being a true example for the struggling believers and to the lost sheep! People in this world need to see and witness that Jesus in you! People are so scared and confused and the easy way to fight off these temptations is by evil and wickedness. But I firmly believe everyone needs to be guided to the light! Be that light my brothers and sisters. Stand firm for Jesus and go out planting seeds of love, patience, gentleness, self-control, kindness, joy, peace, goodness, and faithfulness! I know I'm boldly and radically standing for what I profess and believe in my/our Lord and King Jesus Christ! I can't go half any longer! When you know better but still decide to do bad, selfish, evil, and wicked things you don't truly love and believe in Jesus Christ! Read your Bible and it'll tell you the same thing!

I encourage you all to love Jesus with all your heart, mind, and soul! Be true to Him who gave His life for us all! He gave us life! Eternal life with God! He gave us a beautiful example and a road map so why not follow it, I'll pray for the "whole" body of Christ to come together and start functioning as a proper unit to bring God the glory He deserves! Many lost fish to be

**HOW'S YOUR MASTERLIFE?  
JESUS AND YOU**



caught and brought to God! Remember, God's throwing a party and He wants everyone to be invited!

Your brother in Jesus Christ with love and peace,

**Christopher Phipps, Scotland**

## PRAYER REQUEST

I, Derrick Poke, want to say hello to all my brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father bless you and keep you safe. This is a trying time for me. I have been saved since 2013, not my first commitment, but my first true commitment! It has been up and down, but I have not given up or in, the devil is truly busy. That is why we have to stay prayed up and keep Ephesians 6:10-20 firmly in our hearts and minds and soul's. But I was not prepared for what came, I was told that I had cancer. In my backside, me, who was never sick enough to go in the hospital for anything. So, it gave me pause, but my faith kicks in, telling me God will never leave me nor forsake me. If I just believe in Jesus Christ, who died for us all. I thought about one of my favorite verses, Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me. It has been 5 weeks since I was told about the cancer, I have had pains and other problems, bleeding in my backside, weakness in my legs, pain in my groin. But through it all, I called on the Lord daily to help me. And He does, the pain eases, when the doctor won't give pain meds. It seems like they don't

But my Father does, and I know the Holy Spirit brought me peace and mercy, He put people in my path with the message that it will be alright! A fellow believer told me it's one of the easiest to get rid of. A nurse told me I will be all right. Then the doctor, after some tests, they don't see it anywhere else. So, they are going to do the radiation treatments on me instead of surgery because I might end up with a bag on my side, but she said that the radiation work's



really well on this type of cancer. So, pray for me, remember Psalms 23, The Lord is my Shepherd. if you trust in Him, He will keep you!

**Derrick Pope, Harnett**

## Art Comments

**Ghost of SEG** is amazingly detailed, to the degree that it looks as if "SEG" was present while the picture was done. His eyes certainly have a look that says, "There's more to this story". **Brenden.**

**In Memory of Dakota, Seagull, Ghost of SEG** - In these, I think the attention to detail, and creative composition were what caught my eye. They all three were very strong. I especially liked the boat in the background of the Seagull. These show real talent and I encourage the artists to continue to express themselves through art. Who knows where that could lead? Kris and Christine.

**Ghost of SEG** - absolutely amazing! The details are so lifelike, I feel like I am looking at a photograph instead of a drawing. **The Morgan Freeman** picture is incredible too. **The Gift** - Excellent work. The coloring is beautiful, and the realistic mother/child moment is spot on. **The Trickster** - Amazing details on the fur. Very realistic and has the appearance of being able to reach out and touch him. Beautiful job! **Andrew.**

**The Gift**- As a mother, this one projected the love of a mother to me. Beautiful

portrait. **The Park**- love the shape of the artwork and colors. **Mueller**- So realistic! **Dana.**

**Ghost of SEG; The Trickster; The Gift.** The detail work in all of these pieces is amazing. It was difficult to just pick 3. There was so much detail work in my first choice that it just appeared so real. I could just see the wheels turning in the mind of the fox in the second choice. I wanted to see what trouble he was getting ready to cause. My 3rd choice related the love that the woman has for the child she is holding. I liked how the artist used a bit of an abstract background which made the clarity and detail of the woman and child stand out. I really enjoy art. Thank you for the opportunity to experience the talent of these individuals. **Beverly.**

**The Gift** - Really captures the warmth of the relationship, so impressive. **In Memory of Dakota** - The eyes captivate my attention; the other two submissions were very good as well. This image in particular is sharp and captivating-hope to see more. **Morgan Freeman** - The detail in this and the ghost portrait is outstanding. Very impressive work in both. Morgan Freeman is my favorite of the two because I am much more familiar, and the detail expressed. This portrait is spot on. **Steven.**



SPECIAL NOTICES - Get your testimonies in early, we work on the newsletter and web site all the time.

SPECIAL THANKS - Contributors both in testimonies and art, we would not be where we are without you, Thanks!

SPECIAL THANKS to financial and time commitments - Debra, Carol, Church on the Rise, Harvey, Jon, Michael, Phyliss, Ralph, Robert, Walt, Lili, Travis, Bequita, Rachel, and Waltea.



understand.



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