

STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RE-ENTRY INTO SOCIETY BY EX-OFFENDERS

As our ministry (**CHRISTIAN AFTERCARE MINISTRIES**) reaches it's 15th anniversary of existence, I wanted to share some spiritual truths critical to an ex-offender's success as he re-enters society.

1. Truly believe and clearly understand that only Jesus Christ can transform a person's life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17
2. Accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior with all of your heart and read the Bible and pray everyday. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." I Peter 2:2
3. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your lives and to help you shed your old sinful ways (lying, anger, manipulation , lust etc.) and replace these actions with the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance)
4. Attend bible studies and chapel services while in prison/jail and when released from prison find a bible-preaching church and attend faithfully every week. Cultivate Christian friends and turn from old companions who are not walking with the Lord. " Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25
5. Truly understand that the Lord has a wonderful plan for the rest of your life and He will bless you as you walk with Him. " Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm 1:1,2
6. Do not immediately get involved in a relationship with the opposite sex.(unless you are already married.) You need to get your own life grounded and stabilized before entering into a romantic relationship with another person. This may take some time. Wait on the Lord for His timing. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait , I say on the Lord." Psalm 27:14
7. Have a Christian friend or mentor to whom you will be accountable. This could be your pastor or another Christian layman. Go to him in times of testing for his support and counsel.
8. Do not distort or misinterpret the Bible to justify your behavior. Psalm 19:11
And do not look to other "supposed" Christians who appear to be doing O.K. to justify your behavior when your behavior is contrary to biblical teaching.
9. Be sure to listen and take to heart wise counsel coming from Christians who truly care for you and your well being.