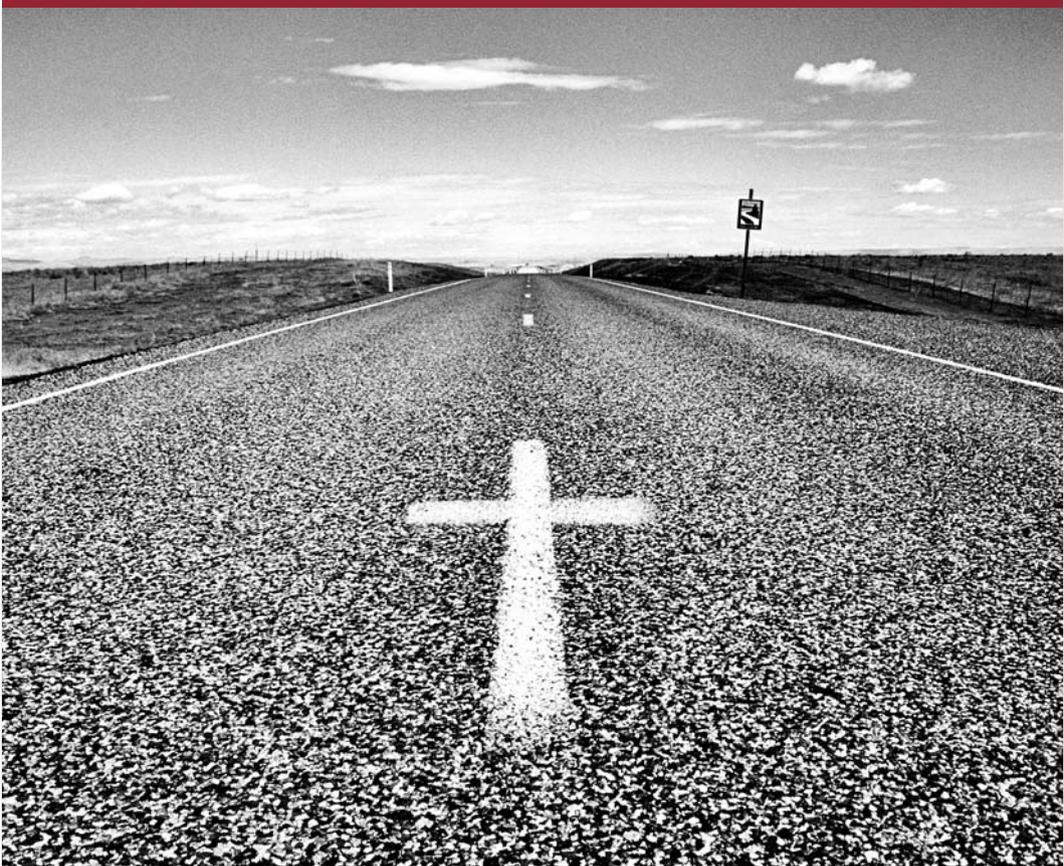




# SHORTIMER

*Preparing for Release*



**Small is the gate and narrow the road  
that leads to life, and only a few find it.**

**—Matthew 7:14**



**Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make your paths straight.**

**—Proverbs 3: 5-6**

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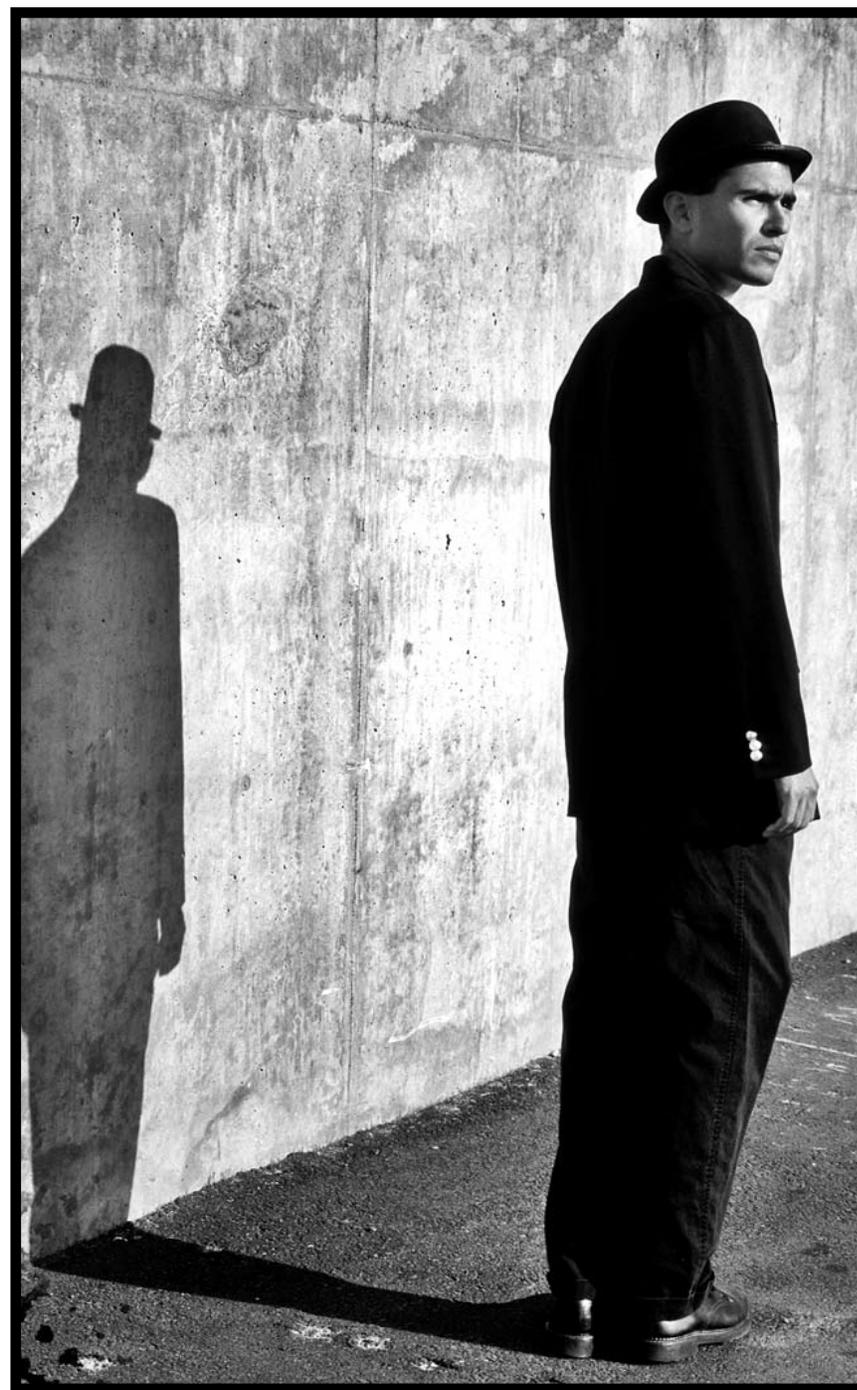
## I. Introduction

**Y**ou just got the word. The parole board has agreed and you are out in 30 days. Whether you have been down for 6 months or 60 years, you are no doubt feeling a flood of emotions—relief, excitement—followed by anxiety, fear, and a lot of what ifs. You will likely fantasize about just how good life will be on the outside. Then you will start to worry. *What if I can't find work? What if I can't find a place to live? What if I screw up again and I have to come back?*

You won't be alone. It may be a very special day for you, but an average of 2,500 prisoners in America are released on any given weekday. Most people think that it would be great if ex-prisoners left prison to become responsible, tax-paying citizens. But you are not likely to hear a lot of positive "can do" encouragement from fellow prisoners, officers, family members, and friends. The only thing that you share in common with the other 2,499 inmates released on your day is that the odds seem to be stacked against you—all of you. They are actually not as bad as they used to be—in the 1990s the rearrest rate **within three years of release** from prison was a crushing **67 percent**. A growing number of **reentry programs** is currently helping to bring that number down, but that still means for every four released prisoners who survive and make it on the outside, **six will stay tangled up with the justice system**. How you prepare for your own release will largely determine into which group you fall.

Prison Fellowship staff members have gathered and/or written the material in this booklet to help you make your release a permanent reality. We will introduce you to useful resources and good advice from those who have made it on the outside. The agencies listed in this booklet may be able to provide even more resource lists to aid you in your transition. Also, please realize that some of the information in this booklet may be out of date as national organizations change, move, close, or adjust their services.

The information contained here is not a guarantee of success, but we offer it with the hope that it will give you some ideas and places to start. You can do this, by God's grace, and we want to help. ■



## II. Soul Success

**S**hortimer is not the first nor the most complete book ever produced on preparing for release. Yet, we do like to offer up front one critical piece of information that we believe is central to success.

We could begin by telling you all about how to get an education, how to get a job, how to find housing and a car. A lot of folks assume poverty, bad family background, and lack of opportunity cause a person to get into crime because they have no choices. And if we just fix those things with a new job, degree, or car, all will be well. But when you consider that many inmates had plenty of money, houses, cars, loving families, and work before their crime, we must conclude that those things are not the root causes of crime.

The answer, whether one is poor or rich, is the same. Crime is a moral problem and requires a moral solution. There are thousands of poor and rich people who never commit crimes, so we know it's not about economic status. Why do people break the law? Jealousy. Envy. Greed. Hate. Lust. Selfishness. Pride. Think about it. The following story of Jorge Valdes shows this principle in action.

Jorge Valdes fled Cuba as a young boy, slept on the floor in a tiny apartment with six other relatives, and was taught a solid work ethic. He went to college and worked for the Federal Reserve Bank in Florida. Some businessmen needed a bilingual banker to help them, and when Jorge realized they were big-time drug dealers, *envy* was born. "I'd sacrificed money, sleep, and my social life to attend school," Jorge explained. Yet these men, not half as educated as he was, "reeked of money." His boss offered him the chance to sell cocaine at \$70,000 per kilo. Jorge did the math and began his life with a major Colombian cartel.

Jorge delivered 150 kgs a month to California, laundering the money and making hundreds of thousands of dollars. He bought houses, cars, and clothes. He learned the business. He even followed his mentor's example by making regular charitable contributions exceeding \$60,000 a month to poor communities—made possible by the cocaine flooding California and then Florida.

But with crime comes corruption. By now Jorge was preparing to marry for the second time. He ordered his first wife to abort a child he didn't want and regularly slept with other women. He had Florida justice officials on his payroll. His lust for sex, money, and power grew—but it would soon run into a snag.

On a return flight from Bolivia, where Jorge met with a cocaine supplier, his plane crash-landed in a Panama jungle. Police sent Jorge to the dungeon of Modelá, Panama's worst prison and a vicious torture chamber. But even weeks



of electric cattle prods and beatings didn't force Jorge to divulge information about his operations. Manuel Noriega gift-wrapped Jorge for U.S. Marshals by putting him on a direct flight to Miami and making a phone call. Arrested and convicted, Jorge began serving a 10-year sentence in 1979 for his drug activities.

### Twice as big as before

A COCKY 23-YEAR-OLD, Jorge made prison serve him as much as possible. He assembled a team of inmates to smuggle all the luxuries he wanted into prison. He even married a third time and had 10 tuxedoed waiters serve lobster and drinks for every inmate to help celebrate.

While doing time at Eglin, he saw a notice of an upcoming seminar featuring Chuck Colson—President Nixon's former hatchetman who had served time for a Watergate-related offense. Colson had been a man of power like Jorge, so he decided to go hear what Chuck had to say. As Colson preached the Gospel and shared his story, "it was the first and perhaps strongest seed planted," Jorge says about that moment in his journey to faith. But he ignored it. His early release, after he'd served only five years, launched his second drug career.

In 1984, Jorge doubled the size of his drug empire, making \$1 million a month moving 1,000 kgs of cocaine. He bought planes, helicopters, million-dollar horses, and a ranch. "It was all a game, and I was winning," he recalls.

But the high life left Jorge feeling filthy. Two associates had died, his pornography addiction rocked his third marriage, and now he had three children whom he'd die for—yet he was making their lives miserable. One night during a separation from his third wife, as he slept with two other women, Jorge's

two-year-old daughter Krystle knocked on his locked bedroom door, crying for him. Struck with shame, he ordered the women out and scalded himself in the shower attempting to wash the feelings away. An hour later he found his daughter whimpering, asleep on the hard floor. *How could I be so evil?* Jorge thought.

## Never again

OVERWHELMED by his own wickedness, Jorge decided to leave the cartel. He called his Colombian godfather to explain, and because Jorge had never compromised his loyalty, he was left alone. There was plenty of cash and a ranch business to keep Jorge comfortable. With retirement came free time, and he used it to take private karate lessons from Tim Brooks, a seventh-degree black belt.

At their first lesson, Tim reached into his black bag and said, “I want to teach you about the sword.” Hoping for a ninja sword to appear, Jorge got angry when Tim pulled out a Bible. “I don’t believe in God . . . I *am* God . . . so leave this ‘sword’ at home,” Jorge said indignantly. Tim rebuffed him coolly, “What I have to give you, you don’t have enough money to buy.”

They compromised. Jorge agreed to listen to Tim after each lesson. Tim explained the Gospel and much about the Bible—then lived it out with his wife and other Christian friends. Over the next three years Jorge’s disbelief began to melt as he watched people love him for something other than his money, power, or drugs. They paid for their own meals when hanging out together and seemed to be genuinely happy without his millions. Yet as time passed, Jorge’s life deteriorated more; his third marriage ended in divorce, and his children were crushed by the family mess. Seeing the truth of Christianity lived out in front of him and feeling the consequences of his former life bearing down, Jorge fell to his knees in desperation and asked Jesus into his life—with all his heart.

“I felt refreshed,” Jorge said with a smile. “Strangest of all, I felt *clean*! As though all the dirt of my life had suddenly been power-washed away.”

## Cleaning up his act

IN JUNE OF 1990 U.S. MARSHALS again arrested Jorge at a horse show. Old drug associates under arrest had fingered him for past crimes. During the legal process he prayed one night on his bunk at the Atlanta Penitentiary: “I gave You my word I would live for You. I just ask You for two things: Please save my children, and please give me the strength to go forward.”

In negotiations with lawyers and prosecutors, Jorge freely confessed his guilt and voluntarily gave up every asset he owned. Within months of becoming a Christian, he was literally penniless and facing 10 more years for a second drug

conviction. Worse were the realizations of how destructive his cocaine had been on children, marriages, and lives—a truth God was now revealing. “God had forgiven me—but some people were dead because of me. How many millions of lives had been destroyed? Their most productive years squandered away in the insatiable quest for the white powder I had peddled?”

Back in prison without drugs or power, Jorge decided to make it a positive experience. “I concentrated and worked hard. When I walked out, I had a degree and a half.”

After Jorge exhibited five years of model changed-life behavior, Jorge’s lawyer convinced two judges to release him early. He applied for scholarships and student loans to finish his master’s degree at Wheaton College, then earned a Ph.D. at Loyola. He married a Christian woman and moved to Atlanta. Then organizers of an event to reach gangs in Chicago urged Jorge to share his story. “When I did, the Lord convicted me about how my story impacted those kids. They were willing to risk their lives to come to Christ and come out of the gangs. [God] said, ‘I didn’t save you to be a college professor. I saved you to be on the street.’ ”

While he could be earning impressive speaker’s fees or teaching academics, Jorge decided he would be safer from the allure of power if he did something else to earn a living.

“The Church [can be] really quick to create superstars. I realized one of the greatest addictions I had to give up was power. It’s no different having power as a Christian celebrity.” So he joined his wife to start a ServiceMaster franchise that specializes in cleaning carpets and water and fire restoration. “I can speak before the House of Representatives [and teen rallies on weekends], come back and clean carpets, and it balances my life out really well.”

Jorge no longer has jets, fancy jewelry, or stores of cash. Nor the guilt, adultery, pornography, or crime that went with it. Instead his passion is for God.

“The consequences of my past will live with me until Christ comes,” Jorge says soberly. “That’s a fact. That is very difficult. The difference is my past does not bind me now. I can look at a horrible past and see how God is using it to save thousands of kids. Prison will not change any human being. Rehab centers will not change any human being. Tortures will not change any human being—only an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.”

## The Gospel Story

YOU MAY BE ASKING, “What is so powerful about a relationship with Jesus Christ that could change a wicked man like Jorge?” Jesus is a familiar name in our culture, but His true identity is often masked by rumor, hearsay, and stereo-

# What Is Prison Fellowship?

**PRISON FELLOWSHIP** partners with local churches across the country to minister to a group that society often scorns and neglects: prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. God, unlike the world, has always chosen to identify most closely with those who are isolated and broken. “For I was in prison, and you came to visit me . . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:35-36, 40).

Prison Fellowship seeks the transformation of prisoners and their reconciliation to God, family, and community through the power and truth of Jesus Christ. Prison Fellowship relies on evangelism and transformational discipleship—in the context of caring relationships—as the primary means of assisting the incarcerated and their families. This can include everything from Bible teaching to using a network of volunteers to assist in finding jobs, mentors, housing, and churches for those being released.

Prison Fellowship was founded by Chuck Colson, who served as special counsel to President Nixon and went to prison in 1975 for Watergate-related crimes. After his release, God radically changed this former attorney’s career goals—leading him to go back to prison, this time to minister to the men and women behind bars. Established in 1976, Prison Fellowship has grown into the largest prison ministry in the world, partnering with thousands of churches and tens of thousands of volunteers.

types. Who is He really? His story goes hand in hand with what Christians call the Gospel or “good news.” The Bible tells us it started when Adam and Eve decided they didn’t have to listen to God anymore. God had said there was only one tree in the entire Garden of Eden from which they should not eat. But Adam and Eve had a better idea. They’d do it their own way, and so they ate.

The entire human race has reaped the consequences of that choice: “One man disobeyed God and all people became sinners” (Romans 5:19).

Sin threw the perfectly created world into a terrible mess. Sin separated God’s creation from Himself, the Creator. Sin’s ugly results are described in terms that a worker can understand—earning a payment. It is a negative

payment—a punishment: “The wages of sin is death . . .” (Romans 6:23).

That means spiritual, eternal death—separated from God.

But sin and death don’t have the final word. God became a man—Jesus Christ. And Jesus, who lived a sinless life, took on the payment or punishment for your sin. “He himself bore our sins in his body on a tree” (1 Peter 2:24). You may feel worthless because of your failure, ashamed of what you’ve done to your family. But God thinks you’re worth the life of His Son dying on the cross.

And Jesus didn’t just die for your sins. He rose from the dead. And that is great news! Because He lives, so will all who invite Him to become their Lord and Savior—saving you from your sins, and lovingly leading your life.

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection opens a way for us to restore a relationship to God that was broken by sin. It means that even though we will die a natural death (our physical bodies), we will be able to spend eternity—starting now, right where you stand—with an awesome, loving God.

God offers you this gift of eternal life and forgiveness of sins, but you have to accept the gift. That’s what Jorge did after realizing he was a sinner in need of a Savior. How can you accept the gift? Just talk to God. Pray. If you don’t know what to say, use the words below. The words are not magical; you have to say them from your heart.

*Jesus, I’ve sinned against You, and I’ve hurt many people. I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I believe You paid my death penalty. Please forgive my sins. Come live in my heart and make me a new creation. I don’t understand all there is to knowing You, but I pray that You will show me how to have a relationship with You like Jorge has. Thank You for saving me. I ask this in Your name, Amen.*

If you sincerely asked Jesus to forgive you and live in your life, you now have God’s Spirit living within you. You are God’s child, and He wants to grow you up into a mature believer. He has an adventure for you to live. To help you understand more about this decision you’ve made, we would like to send you a short Bible study and more information. To receive this free material, write to: **Prison Fellowship, 44180 Riverside Parkway, Lansdowne, VA 20176.**

*Shortimer* focuses mostly on external necessities: shelter, finances, and employment. All Christian soon-to-be ex-prisoners should also plan for their spiritual growth as well. If you make the effort now to read the Bible and pray every day, your efforts in planning for a permanent move beyond prison will improve greatly. ■

### III. What Can I Do Before I Walk?

**A** lot, really. But it will depend on when you start. If you thought you'd never get out only to have an officer say in 30 days you're hitting the streets, you're going to feel a little panic. Don't wait. Tackle the most important things first (a place to live, someone to meet you, drug treatment, ID) and work your way down (make a résumé, plan your celebration). The sooner you start, the more you can prepare, eliminate the panic, and impress those around you that you're serious about never coming back.

**Take Advantage of Pre-Release Programs in Your Facility** (excerpted from *Connections 2009*, by Stephan Likosky) | Many pre-release units in prisons have specially trained staff to help you plan your reentry into society. Most pre-release units maintain updated listings of government and community-based agencies which can be of help to you in finding a job, locating a drug program, or addressing any of a multitude of needs. You might also encourage your pre-release center to invite in, as some already do, representatives from community agencies or private companies that do a large amount of hiring, to give presentations.

**Gather Together All of the Documents That You Will Need** (from *Connections 2009*) | In order to apply for jobs and be eligible for most private or governmental programs, it is mandatory that you have available certain types of documentation. If you begin to collect what you need now, a lot of valuable time and much frustration will be saved. At the very least, be sure to have a Social Security Card (sometimes a number alone is not sufficient) and proof of identification (a Birth Certificate, Baptismal Papers, Driver's License or Non-Driver's Photo ID, for example). Each agency has its own requirements as to documentation, but the following are commonly required, or may help in increasing your chances for eligibility:

- Military Discharge Papers
- Alien Registration Card (for Non-U.S. Citizens)
- Prison Discharge Papers (given to you upon release)
- Proof of Education (college transcripts or GED certificate, for example)
- Working Papers (required by persons under 18 years of age)
- Proof of Functional Disability
- Certificate of Relief from Disabilities
- Certificate of Good Conduct

Of course, not all of these documents can be obtained easily, if at all, while



### Pre-Release Success Checklist

THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST contains things to do and things to have prior to release. Failing to complete most of these items before release can increase your chances of returning to prison either on technical violations or for new crimes.

- Get Social Security Card and other forms of ID (certified copy of birth certificate, picture ID).
- Complete any in-prison reentry programs available.
- Clear outstanding warrants, charges, and detainers.
- Clear aliases.
- Seal any and all parts of criminal history that future employers don't need to see.
- Complete drug treatment program or find a program in your community immediately after release.
- Form a job search plan (make a résumé, network with friends and family).
- Secure short-term housing.
- Make a celebration plan for release date.
- Contact Prison Fellowship for more resources. ([www.prisonfellowship.org](http://www.prisonfellowship.org))
- Get directions and a ride to a local church on the first Sunday of your freedom.



you are in prison, but collect what you can, and remember that, in some cases, a family member or friend on the outside may be of help.

It is becoming more common for departments of correction to issue some form of identification. But if such a service is not available, you can obtain a copy of your Social Security card by contacting the Social Security Administration Office (1-800-772-1213). You can call from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Eastern time. They will send you an application for a new card. You can also write the following address and ask for the location of your local Social Security office: *Social Security Administration Office of Public Inquiries, Windsor Park Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 20235.*

To get a picture ID, contact the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). This ID might be a driver's license or just an official ID card. The DMV handles both. Call your DMV to find out the details of taking a driver's test to get a new driver's license. In some states, you can renew your license by mail before it expires. You can look up the DMV under the "state government" listings in the telephone book.

To get a certified copy of your birth certificate, write to the Registrar of Deeds at the courthouse in the county or city where you were born. Ask them to send you the form to complete to request the certified copy (marked with a raised seal). There is usually a fee of a few dollars. ■

## IV. Who's Picking You Up?

**M**aking a positive transition to freedom on your first day is very important—and the first place where things can go wrong. The very first thing that will happen on your release is that you will have to leave the prison somehow. For many, a family member or friend will be there waiting for you to drive you home. That's the best way to go.

But for others, this will be a pivotal trial, because you've been transferred far from home, or have been down so long you don't know anybody personally who could pick you up. No DOC will leave you sitting on the curb. They'll help you with a taxi or bus ticket to wherever you're supposed to go. Your first priority is to find someone who can talk to you that day. There are many agencies and nonprofits listed throughout this booklet (especially Prison Fellowship) that may be able to help out. What happens all too easily is that a lonely ex-prisoner, having no one to pick him or her up or to celebrate with, figures the world does not give a rip. So why not go straight back to what feels good—a drug habit. There goes the gate money and any real hope of making a comeback. A way to avoid that, especially on your first day, is to be with someone (not another lonely addict, please). Try calling a church well in advance and ask if someone can help you out on your first day. ■



## V. Short-term Housing

**M**aking a successful transition to civilian life requires having a reliable place to live. If you're completing your parole in a **halfway house**, there will come a day when you may no longer live there, but must get a place of your own so the next guy can move in. If you're exiting to an **in-house drug rehab program**, you could have 30 to 60 days of housing until you complete the program. If you're on **house-arrest** or an electronic monitoring program, you could already be living at home. Once you're discharged, the deputy or P.O. will remove the bracelet and pack up the phone device, and your life will switch to normal except the phone will no longer ring in the middle of the night.



For those without a halfway house, drug rehab room, or family home to move into, the **Salvation Army** is a good place to start. Cooperative arrangements exist between the Salvation Army and prison, probation, and parole officers in a program of prison rehabilitation and

crime prevention. Some services include pre-release job-training programs, employment opportunities, material aid, and spiritual guidance. Salvation Army rehabilitation centers and Harbor Light centers have been designated as halfway houses for former prisoners to participate in work-release programs.

**National phone: 703-684-5500**

**[www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)**

You can find other up-to-date housing options by going to a public library and looking up **[www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm)** on the Internet to find local homeless shelters and other options in your area. Also, visit **[www.rjcusa.org](http://www.rjcusa.org)**. If you don't know how to work the computer yet, ask a librarian for help.

Another useful resource for housing is the Woman's Prison Association Housing Manual. The manual offers tips on how to locate a good home and how to maintain it. It also discusses the various trials you may encounter and provides forms that you may need to fill out. The manual is located on the WPA website:

**[www.wpaonline.org/pdf/WPA\\_HousingManual.pdf](http://www.wpaonline.org/pdf/WPA_HousingManual.pdf)** ■

## VI. Counseling/Resources for Drug and Other Addictions

**S**tatistics show that close to 80 percent of prisoners have had problems with illegal drugs and that, for most, supporting that habit got them in trouble—using, stealing, dealing, forging, fighting, robbing, even killing. And we all know that many prisoners continue to take drugs in prison. For others, prison has been a detox tank; for the first time in months or years, your body has been clean and you want to keep it that way. But you feel weak. Freedom isn't going to help if you don't seek treatment. We've listed many addiction treatment centers to assist you in beating your habit. Thousands have been treated successfully, and there's no reason you can't be one of them. Write or call before your release day so you have a plan and resources to enter and complete treatment.

◆ **Alcoholics Anonymous** is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with one another that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership. It is self-supporting through contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, political party, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Its primary purpose is to help alcoholics achieve and maintain sobriety.

Contact them at: *AA World Services, Inc., P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. 212-870-3400. [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).*

◆ **Al-Anon/Alateen** is a worldwide organization that offers a program of help and mutual support for families and friends of someone with a drinking problem. Al-Anon Family Group meetings welcome anyone who believes that his or her life has been affected by the drinking habits of someone in either the past or the present (Alateen meetings are similar but designed for teens). The Al-Anon and Alateen programs consist primarily of independently operated meetings of people who gather to share their experience, strength, and hope with one another, and to learn how to apply the principles of Al-Anon to their own recovery from the effects of someone else's drinking.

For more specific information, contact them at: *Al-Anon/Alateen Family*

Group, World Service Office, 1600 Corporate Landing Pkwy., Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617. 757-563-1600. [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org).

◆ **Debtors Anonymous** is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with one another that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from compulsive borrowing. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt. There are no dues or fees for DA membership. DA is not allied with any sect, denomination, political organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Its primary purpose is to help compulsive debtors stop incurring unsecured debt one day at a time.

Contact them at: *Debtors Anonymous General Service Office, P.O. Box 920888, Needham, MA 02492.* 781-453-2743. [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org).

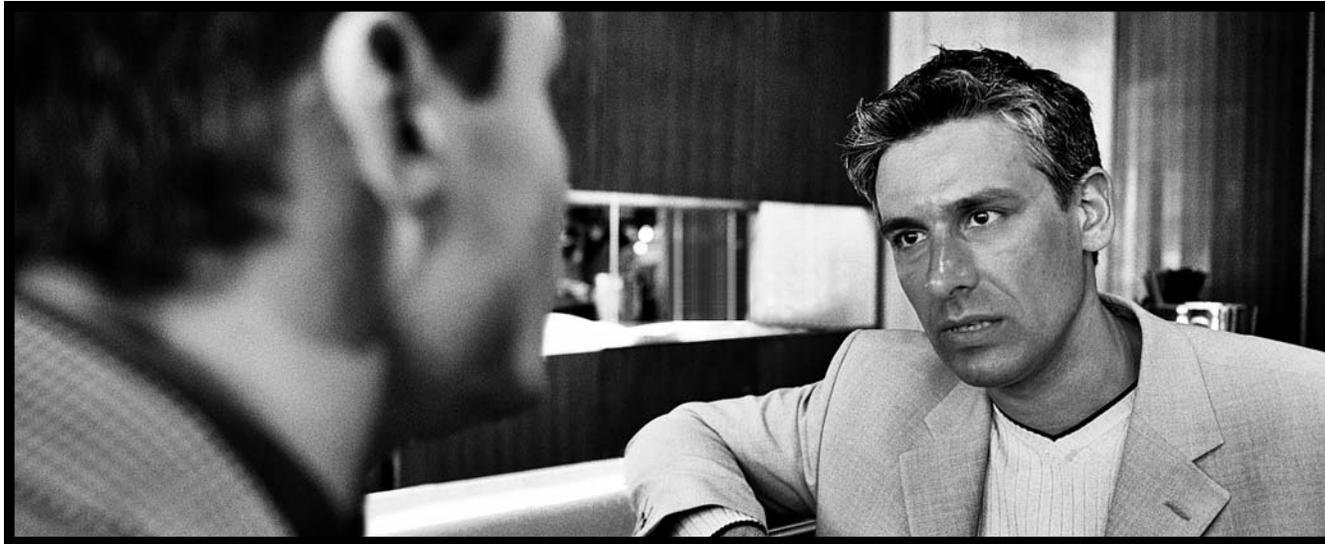
◆ **Emotions Anonymous** is a 12-step organization, similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. This fellowship is composed of people who come together in weekly meetings for the purpose of working toward recovery from emotional difficulties. EA members are from many walks of life and are of diverse ages, economic status, social, and educational backgrounds. The only requirement for membership is a desire to become well emotionally.

Contact them at: *P.O. Box 4245, St. Paul, MN 55104.* 651-647-9712. [www.emotionsanonymous.org](http://www.emotionsanonymous.org).

◆ **Exodus International** is the largest Christian referral and information ministry dealing with homosexual issues in our world today. To keep you informed of the worldwide ministries, they offer monthly newsletters, annual conferences,

speaking engagements, and, of course, Web services. Exodus is a global resource that offers freedom through the love of Jesus Christ. They can refer you to ministries in your area.

Contact them at: *Exodus International—North America, P.O. Box 540119, Orlando, FL, 32854.* 1-888-264-0877. [www.exodus-international.org](http://www.exodus-international.org).



◆ **Gamblers Anonymous** is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with one another that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling. There are

no dues or fees for Gamblers Anonymous membership. Its primary purpose is to help compulsive gamblers stop gambling.

Contact them at: *P.O. Box 17173, Los Angeles CA 90017.* 213-386-8789. [www.gamblersanonymous.org](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org).

◆ **Narcotics Anonymous** is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts with more than 31,000 weekly meetings in over 100 countries worldwide. Membership is open to all drug addicts, regardless of the particular drug or combination of drugs used. When adapting AA's First Step, the word "addiction" was substituted for "alcohol," thus removing drug-specific language and reflecting the "disease concept" of addiction. There are no social, religious, economic, racial, ethnic, national, gender, or class-status membership restrictions. There are no dues or fees for membership.

Contact at: *P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409.* 818-773-9999. [www.na.org](http://www.na.org).

◆ **Overcomers Outreach** is a nonprofit ministry dealing with all compulsive behaviors through Christ-centered 12-step support groups. Overcomers is intended

to be a supplement to—not a replacement for—the traditional 12-step groups.

Contact them at: 12828 Acheson Drive, Whittier, CA 90601. 1-800-310-3001.

[www.overcomersoutreach.org](http://www.overcomersoutreach.org).

◆ **The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Centers** operate on, and are grounded in, Christian values. The Salvation Army operates 119 centers across the country. They provide shelter, food, clothing, medical and psychiatric assistance, work, vocational training, fellowship, and spiritual guidance. Contact the center in the area to which you will be released.

Local chapters of the Salvation Army can be found in the phone book or by contacting the national headquarters: *The Salvation Army, P.O. Box 269, Alexandria, VA 22313.* 703-684-5500. [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org).

◆ **Sexaholics Anonymous** is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. It received permission from AA in 1979 to use its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lust and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership. SA also has a Correctional Facilities Committee (SACFC) that takes the 12-step program into prisons.

Contact at: 3565 Brentwood, Nashville, TN 37222. 615-370-6062. [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org).

◆ **The Spirit of Freedom Ministries** is a nonprofit Christian organization dedicated to helping prisoners and families end their alcohol or drug-related problems. The ministry offers a variety of helpful materials, including a comprehensive Bible-based program designed to instruct the chemically dependent and bring them out of the bondage of addiction. The program, called The Christian Intervention Program for the Chemically Dependent, is available in many prisons throughout the United States and in parts of Canada.

To obtain a free copy of their booklet *Raised from the Ruins*, the testimony of Fred Hyde, write to: *The Spirit of Freedom Ministries, P.O. Box 6684, Metairie, LA 70009-6648.* 1-800-535-6011. [www.sofm.org](http://www.sofm.org). (\$2.00 for shipping and handling)

◆ **Teen Challenge** is a national organization that provides residential and nonresidential treatment for drug and alcohol addiction in both adults and adolescents. Information regarding this tough but excellent program and a directory of locations are available from: *National Teen Challenge, 5250 N. Towne Centre Drive, Ozark, MO 65721.* 417-581-2181. [www.teenchallengeusa.com](http://www.teenchallengeusa.com). ■

## Poppies—No, Mouthwash—O.K.

AN INMATE ONCE WROTE TO PRISON FELLOWSHIP to report how the Bureau of Prisons had returned him to prison. Out on parole at a halfway house, reunited with his family and drug free, the inmate was called some months later from his new job to show up for a drug test problem. His urinalysis had come back positive for morphine.

His surprise and explanation of having eaten a couple of poppy seed muffins did not impress authorities. Charged with a technical violation, he was rearrested and returned to prison.

According to the National Toxicologists Specialists (NTS) website, eating poppy seeds is enough to screen positive for morphine—the drug cultivated in this little black seed. It's a story that many have heard about, but few know whether it's urban legend or based on some fact.

Morphine levels in poppy plants vary from species to species. Generally, the lower level poppies are used in the cooking of muffins, cakes, and noodles.

All drug labs have a standard screening level to test for morphine. According to NTS, anything under 2,000 ng/ml could be explained by poppy-crusted bagels from the corner bakery.

However, the possibility exists of a dirty drug test after eating an innocent slice of poppy seed cake. If you're about to be released under any drug restrictions that will mandate regular testing, **Prison Fellowship** offers this advice: Don't eat any poppy seed products at all until you are completely clear of any mandatory tests.

How about mouthwash? Can it interfere and cause a breath alcohol test to come up positive? According to NTS, "No, if [the test] is done correctly. According to the DOT regulations, one must perform a confirmation test and wait 20 minutes to allow for the residual mouth alcohol to dissipate. The breath alcohol test measures deep lung air, and the residual mouth alcohol is gone in as little as 5 minutes, so that 20 minutes is plenty of time to wait and do the confirmation. Any positive by saliva must be confirmed by a breath alcohol device."



## VII. Financial Planning

The following articles on financial issues were originally published in *Inside Journal* (PF's former newspaper for prisoners). The insight and advice they offer is still useful for rebuilding your personal financial foundation.

### Digging Out of Debt

by Doug Hagedorn

DO YOU HAVE MASSIVE DEBT? Haven't saved much money for your release? Join the club! The average American household carries more than \$10,000 in debt! Whether you are a prisoner or free citizen, people are not doing well when it comes to managing their money. We save less, give less, have more debt, and file more bankruptcies than any previous generation. You may cringe at the thought of dealing with financial problems when you get out, but that does not change the fact that the problems will still be there. If you don't prepare now to deal with them, you may end up taking shortcuts that will cause your post-release life to crumble.

#### How deep is the hole?

DIGGING OUT OF DEBT begins with understanding your current debt situation. You may have had debts paid off or forgiven that you don't even know about. You may have other debts where interest is still accumulating. Answer the following questions carefully because each one will help give you a piece of information that will help you structure how you will get out of debt.

- To whom do you owe money? (credit cards, vehicles, child support)
- How much do you owe them?
- What are your minimum monthly payments for each?
- How much credit card interest are you paying on a monthly/yearly basis?
- How much interest are you paying on other debt?
- What is the interest rate on each of your debts?
- How much are you paying monthly toward debt that you could use for other things?

Next, make a debt "hit list." Once you have listed all of your creditors, the



amount owed to each, and the current minimum monthly payment, you can plan to pay off each debt one at a time. Start with the smallest and move to the next largest debt. As you pay off one debt and apply the extra monthly amount you now have available toward the next debt, you create a snowball effect.

For example, say you have four debts: a credit card debt of \$400 at 19 percent, a department store card of \$800 at 16 percent, back alimony of \$1,500 at 8 percent, and a car debt of \$2,000 at 8 percent. Start by wiping out the credit card debt. It's the smallest; it will go quickly. Meanwhile, you would make the minimum monthly payments on the other debts. Let's say you were able to pay \$50 a month toward the credit card. In about 10 months, you're done (don't forget the interest piling up will make it last longer than you think). Now take that \$50, combine it with your minimum payment and start on the department store card. Finally, take on the alimony and car debt. It will take a few years, but this is one of the most effective ways to dig out.

#### Avoid the quick fix

WHILE IT'S IMPORTANT to get back into the pace of freedom, you will want to avoid the blizzard of advertising that promises quick fixes to your money

problems. Get-rich seminars and get-out-of-debt-quick scams sound too good to be true—and usually are. If you’re going to get out of your financial hole, you will have to stop digging, and unfortunately, there are many temptations to keep digging.

Giving in to ad slogans such as “no payments for six months,” “no interest for one year,” “low monthly payments,” and “sale ends tomorrow,” are likely to make matters worse, not better. They invite you to buy stuff with money you don’t have and without any guarantees that you will have the money when the payments (with interest) kick in. Even fixed low-interest rate credit cards are dangerous because your low “fixed rate” gets jacked up if you miss a payment. Fees are charged for payments even one day late. Legal pay-day loan shops trap needy people by offering quick cash for writing post-dated checks. This unfortunate loan-sharking can hit you with interest rates of more than 500 percent! Avoid rent-to-own stores as you will pay three to four times the retail price for the convenience of “low-monthly payments.” Wait until you can pay cash.

No single debt-reduction action will lead to overnight financial freedom. The reality for most people is that it took years to get into debt, and it will take years and discipline to dig out. Paying a debt-consolidation service or filing for bankruptcy may not be the best answers either. They can cost you more money and damage your credit rating. Repairing and maintaining your credit rating is important if you ever plan to buy a home or other similar-sized purchase.

## New habits

NEW DISCIPLINES will be required if you’re going to make your debt disappear. Here are some simple methods of controlling the impulse to go deeper in debt.

Give yourself a 60-day waiting period for any purchase above \$25. Ask yourself some simple questions before giving in to buying something you really can’t afford: Do I really *need* this or is it a want? Do I need it *now*? Have I shopped around for the best price? Can I get it used? Can I wait until it goes on sale? Can I really afford it? What will I give up if I buy this? How does it impact my long-term goals? Should I pray about it first?

An impulse buy that takes 10 minutes can impact your bank and credit card health for years to come. For example, a \$2,000 credit card purchase at 19.8-percent interest typically requires a \$20 minimum monthly payment. At that payment rate, it will take 31 years to pay the \$2,000 off, *plus* you will have paid \$8,300 in interest!

If we are in debt, we really don’t even own what we have. Make a commitment to incur no new debt. Beware, credit card offers will begin flowing to your

mailbox sooner than you think. Consider keeping only one credit card for emergencies, and you had better define what an emergency is! It’s not a quick trip to the tropics to catch some rays. Using cash and debit cards as much as possible will keep you well aware of how much you have or don’t have.

Contact your creditors and begin the negotiation process for paying off your debt. Most creditors desire to work with you if they know that the alternative is default or bankruptcy—especially if you explain why you are not making payments. If they know that you desire to work out a modified payment plan, they are often willing to deal. They might want you to make regular payments for some months before they are ready to commit to a settlement such as freezing interest, reducing interest rates, or canceling past penalties and fees—all definitely worth working toward.

Most people can dig themselves out of debt after they get their foundational issues of life straight and set up a budget. However, if you try these things and find you aren’t disciplined enough or can’t work out a repayment plan with your creditors, consider contacting a credit counseling service. Beware of *some* credit repair and counseling services that charge hundreds or even thousands of dollars in up-front fees that do nothing to improve your credit report. The trend with many debt consolidation companies is that they hold your payments until they finish negotiating with creditors, which takes months. Meanwhile, your credit rating gets ruined while creditors send threatening notices to you. Some companies are trustworthy and helpful. Before using one, check it out with your local consumer protection office and the Better Business Bureau.

## The best help around

REMEMBER THAT YOU are not in this battle alone. Even if the mountain of debt seems beyond hope, do not minimize the role of faith in your journey. It is vital to your success. God has not left you or given up on you. He provides wisdom to those who ask. Continue to educate yourself about financial matters. There is a lot to learn.

And remember to pray. You will have to make some changes, and not all of them will be easy. But God will provide grace, strength, and fellowship. If you fall or err—dust yourself off and continue. Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint. ■

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*Doug Hagedorn is author of Ease the Squeeze—Develop a Life Plan, a Giving Plan, and a Financial Plan, and teaches financial seminars in churches.*

# Developing a Spending Plan for Life

by Doug Hagedorn

MOST PEOPLE WHEN ASKED whether they want to be financially free answer a big Yes! Who wouldn't want to be out of debt, have money to chase their dreams, and be able to give whenever a need came up? The problem is that most people don't know how to get there.

The first step to financial freedom is establishing your moral foundation in relationship to God. Most people don't get into dire money problems because they're dumb, but because of greed, dishonesty, or addictions, all of which are heart problems. In "Digging Out of Debt," I discussed the importance of making a debt reduction plan. You can't see your dreams come true or even pay your monthly bills if you have a mountain of debt crushing you.

Now it's time to talk about the financial concept that will help you with both debt reduction and achieving your dreams—it's called a spending plan. It addresses all your priorities (giving, debt, entertainment, education, family). It ties them all together. Many people know it better as a budget, but that word scares people because it sounds depressing and has the feel of a financial strait-jacket. Many have tried a budget at one time in their lives, but dropped it after they overspent in an area, had an unplanned expense, or made a financial mistake. A budget is really nothing more than a plan for spending your money. We have to spend money. Why not have a plan? If you get lost while driving, do you throw away the map, or get yourself back on the right road? A budget is your financial map that will save you time and heartache. It does not guarantee that an unforeseen financial accident will not hit your car. But it does provide direction and guidance to get you through it.

## Income versus the spending plan

THE MILLION-DOLLAR QUESTION has to be: How do I get spending habits to match my income? Many people want to focus first on making more money—a decent goal, but not always possible in the short run and not usually the answer anyway. Money doesn't buy happiness. More "stuff" may make you happy for a short while, but when the bill collectors call or you can't afford what you really need down the road, reality will set in. Costs for insurance, education, vehicles, and medical care continue to rise, making it a challenge to keep up with the basics like rent, food, and clothes—all the more reason to have a spending plan.

Most folks do not believe that they can cut any more of their expenses. I



watched a reporter on the evening news interview a couple being forced to remove mounds of trash from the side of their house by some neighbors. The husband said that he could not afford to pay for the trash removal. I noticed in the background a satellite dish, a late-model car, and some other items of value in their yard. He had money for those things; why not money to get rid of the rubbish? We basically spend what we want to spend. Obviously, some exceptions exist, but everyone has some areas where he or she can cut.

Unfortunately, most people don't take time to look at their spending patterns enough to know if they have an income or expense problem. Many folks try to ignore the whole thing until it reaches a crisis, which is always expensive. Step on the financial scale. It is time to look at both income and spending.

## 90-day paper trail

UPON THE DAY OF YOUR RELEASE, start a paper trail. Keep a written record or ask for a receipt of everything you spend money on—\$.79 for coffee, \$13 for a shirt, \$31 for the phone bill, everything. The most important thing that you can

# Cost Cutters to Crush Those Budget Busters

ALMOST EVERYONE SOONER OR LATER OVERSPENDS his or her spending plan (aka budget). Don't worry and don't quit! There are lots of creative ways to play catch-up and avoid starting a debt-crushing trend of always spending more than you make.

You'll need to cut expenses in other areas for the next paycheck. Delay



a purchase or maybe find some odd jobs temporarily to get you back on track. If you cannot make ends meet and you are spending more than you make, it's time to get creative and humble. Use coupons. Read the newspaper classified ads. Shop for sales before buying something. Cook meals yourself. Rent a movie instead of going to the theater. Find free things to do

(museums, parks, church activities). Pack your lunch. Select a higher insurance deductible (which lowers your monthly payments). Buy things off-season (winter clothes in summer, Christmas gifts in June). Quit costly habits (smoking, drinking, gambling, playing the lottery). Use the public library rather than buying new books. Drink water not sodas. Try generic store brands. Sell your car rather than trading it in. Get rid of phone add-ons (call waiting, caller ID). Cancel cable television service.

Your first spending plan will not be perfect. Don't give up. Don't be afraid to get help if you need it.

do to begin developing a realistic spending plan is to write down absolutely everything you spend for 90 days. Most people are truly shocked at where their money goes.

One couple that I counseled assured me that they definitely had no "fat" to cut, and the husband believed that he needed to get another job immediately. I asked them to postpone his decision and follow the 90-day budget tracking process. They did and found that they were spending double what they had thought on eating out, their hobbies, and recreational activities. They also had some expensive monthly bills—like cable television—that they could cut temporarily while getting out of debt.

Budget busters usually reflect our areas of weakness, our little escapes from reality like eating too much, buying lottery tickets, or alcohol. However, they can also be found in an unexpected car repair or replacing a dead dishwasher. To bring a little discipline to bear, try putting a cash allowance for each area in an envelope—like \$20 per month for eating out. When the "allowance" is all gone—it's gone! When it comes to emergency repair or replacement, set aside \$25 to \$30 a month and don't touch it. After nine months you will create a nice cushion to handle a toilet break or a flat tire.

You may not want or be able to track all of your spending each day. Just throw the receipts in a shoebox and add them up at the end of a week or month.

After 90 days of tracking your expenses, you should go to work on a detailed spending plan. Total what you spent in each category. Divide each total by the number of days that you have been tracking the expenses. Multiply that answer by 30 to determine a monthly average. For example, you spend \$90 on fast food over a 90-day period. That is \$30 per month. Your income allows only \$15 per month, so that is your new target. Total up your categories to find your monthly *expenses*. Subtract these expenses from your total *income* for the month. Are you over or under? Whatever the case, that's your first crack at a spending plan.

But is it worth all the time and hard work? Try it and see.

A spending plan will help you to think before you spend—and to spend less money than you make. It will help you learn which areas of your life are in need of greater discipline. So far, that sounds like no fun. But if you follow through, you will also begin to taste some real financial freedom—money that could go toward guitar lessons, college education, a family vacation, some new music, giving to someone in need. Remember that how you spend money directly reflects the priorities of your heart. Tend to your heart first, then live it out through your spending plan. ■

# Repairing Your Credit History

by Anthony Gonzales

DID YOU LEAVE A TRAIL OF PAPER BEHIND when you stepped inside? Overdrawn bank account? Credit-card debts? Car loan? While you've been absent from the free world, all those bad reports were entered into a computer file at the local credit bureau. And from there, the information was sent to your national permanent record.

Once you are released from prison, a bad credit report could prevent you from getting a good job, buying a car, or even renting an apartment. More and more employers are checking applicants' credit histories. If you want to start clean and stay out, you might want to begin to repair your damaged credit rating while you are still inside.

First, get a free copy of your credit report from the credit bureau in your hometown or from: **Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105283, Atlanta, GA 30348.**

When it arrives, examine the report carefully. Are there mistakes in it? You can challenge the mistakes by explaining the error in writing to the credit-reporting agency. Valid debts can often be postponed or cleared by writing to the creditor with a sincere explanation of your circumstances. Many creditors will accept very small regular payments and respect you for your efforts. You will be surprised at how helpful creditors are when you write them and offer to work something out. Ducking the problems won't help.

## Who can help?

YOUR DEBT-CREDIT PROBLEMS may seem like too much to handle alone. There are several agencies that may be able to provide you with assistance, usually for free.

**MYVESTA:** Myvesta is a nonprofit group that assists consumers across the country and around the world via the Web. The site provides useful information, free publications, shareware, and a debt forum where you can ask questions for professional counselors to answer. Special programs also are available to help consumers get out of debt. Their website is **[www.getoutofdebt.org](http://www.getoutofdebt.org)**.

**NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CONSUMER CREDIT:** The National Foundation for Consumer Credit is a group of nonprofit credit counseling organizations that help consumers understand credit reports, contact creditors, manage



debt, and set up budgets. There are more than 1,100 member offices throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

Telephone: 1-800-388-2227

Website: **[www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org)**.

Many of the nonprofit organizations affiliated with the National Foundation for Consumer Credit go by the name of Consumer Credit Counseling Service. You may contact CCCS online at **[www.cccsatl.org](http://www.cccsatl.org)**.

You may want to contact the closest Consumer Credit Counseling Service (now a part of Money Management International) near your prison. Each office has an education department and will consider sending someone out to give your group a presentation, or they can provide counsel over the telephone. To contact the nearest CCCS office call 1-800-251-CCCS. Wait for the message, which will tell you your nearest office location. ■

## VIII. How to Find a Church

by John Leonardson

**R**elease for shortimers raises many questions about jobs, housing, and finances. But perhaps the most important tie that will bind all these concerns into success is belonging to a church.

For the in-prison Christian, the church inside has probably been a great source of encouragement, Bible study, and refuge. You have lived shoulder-to-shoulder with brothers or sisters in Christ sharing the trials of prison survival. You have a deep connection because of these prison experiences. For others, church will be a brand-new experience because you only recently received Christ, didn't have a chapel program, or never found fellow believers on your block. Whatever your current status, release means leaving all that behind. What's waiting for you on the outside?

Regardless of your prison experience, you'll likely be isolated, at first, from the kind of friends you need. For those coming from an active chapel program, free-world church tends to be less intense—you're not living within walking distance of chapel or with any fellow believers, nor will there be a service or Bible study every day of the week. In fact, no outside church will meet all your expectations, because all churches are imperfect and are attended by imperfect people.

The potential rests with the eventual encouragement, accountability, and growth in the faith God will use to satisfy your desires for Him and for a fulfilling life that glorifies Him. In a good local church you'll find pastoral guidance and leadership. It's a safe place to raise a family and make new friends. Many inmates haven't developed good habits for leisure time—the main trouble spot for the newly released. So a good church home can become a place to develop healthy spiritual, recreational, and relational habits with fellow believers in Christ.

For all Christians, even recently paroled ones, belonging to a church is not merely an option—it's a must.

### Plan to search

LET'S TAKE THIS IN STEPS. Decide, while still inside, that you *will* join a church and not look for excuses. Once you decide, the other steps come easier. Begin to plan what kind of church home will be right for you. Ask your chaplain and volunteers you respect about their churches to discover where you might belong. Did you participate in Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree®—a program where churches



provide gifts and the Gospel to the children of prisoners at Christmas? If so, find out what church helped your kids while you were imprisoned and start there.

Perhaps you prefer a formal church with hymns, choir, organ music, and liturgical order. You may like a traditional denomination or an independent Bible church. You might favor “contemporary worship” with bands and raised hands. All of these traits fall under the category of style, and many people get sidetracked by forms of worship. But style is far less important than substance.

What are the essentials of a good church? New Testament churches must believe in and teach the Word of God, have honorable leadership, practice love among the members, challenge members to grow in the Lord, energetically share the Gospel with the unsaved, and assist the needy. Avoid churches that have

adopted worldly “feel-good” messages like “health and wealth,” or that play games by redefining sin. What doesn’t matter is name recognition of the pastor, the size of the church, the denomination, how people dress, or the look of the church building.

## Working the plan

ACT ON YOUR search plan the first Sunday of your release. Praying for guidance is the most important step. If you already know which church you’ll join, that’s fine; otherwise visit several churches you think meet the definition of a healthy church. Don’t be shy to ask for a ride if transportation is a problem. Meet with the pastor to discuss the church and share your background and concerns. The pastor can be the door to many other connections and resources, including job leads, counseling, and guidance on support groups. Not everyone needs to know your prison past up front, but share your prison experience with the pastor.

Next, start attending regularly where God is leading you. Your objective is to join a church within a reasonable time period, for example, within six months. Failing to do this leads to what I call “spiritual hitchhiking.” When you hitch a ride, you don’t take responsibility, pay for gas, or care about other passengers. By joining a church, you support your fellow Christians with your tithes and talents and prove you’re not ashamed to say you belong with the Lord and His people. Standing with a local church fights against “Lone Ranger Christianity” by placing yourself under the discipline and protection of other Christians. “Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV). We turn from being self-centered to following Jesus, the true Head of the Church.

## How to blend in

AFTER MAKING A HABIT of attending one church for a few months, you may ask yourself, *How am I going to get established here and not be someone who just passes through?* There are two considerations to keep in mind as to how well and how long it will take to make those inroads to service and fellowship: Have the people and the pastor had any preparation in receiving ex-prisoners with their unique backgrounds and needs? Most churches do not, so plan in advance to take the chip off your shoulder. Have some patience with them as they, in turn, are learning to trust you. It’s natural for this to take some time.

Second, find someone of your same sex to mentor you. Again, try asking the pastor for help to find this person. When I got out of prison 25 years ago, I had problems with authority and wanted things my way. My mentor helped me work through these attitudes and explained to other people what I was facing. He

made me deal with situations as they arose. One man, for example, did not want me playing with his girls. I was hurt at first, but now, years later, he and his girls (now all married) are friends of mine. A mentor should be on your side, but not afraid to confront you.

Over the years I have had many roles in the church and learned a lot about myself and God. After 25 years, I’m a member of the same church. Today, I serve as an elder, teacher, and mentor to other men—pretty good for a convicted drug dealer! You can be sure the Lord will use your talents and gifts, too, if you give it enough time. Tackle your relationship issues, realizing we’re all sinners saved by grace. Seek counsel from your pastor and mentor, and volunteer to serve. By working in the church, you’ll gain spiritual maturity and grow in your gifts.

Your membership in a local church prepares that church for the next ex-inmate who wants to join. Your decision to take part in the life of a congregation has a direct effect on future ex-prisoners. Make joining a church as big a priority as finding work, beating an addiction, or managing your money. ■

## Developing Church Support

HEY, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO do this while you still had time in the joint! Those nice people who come in weekly to offer Bible studies or lessons in life skills should become your best friends before your release. Don’t try to scam them; if you are not their first released inmate, they will have seen the tricks and be on the lookout. Also, you just make it harder for the guy who sincerely wants to be drawn into a church environment.

If you forgot to do this part while in prison, get yourself some neat, clean clothes and begin visiting nearby churches Sunday mornings. It may take a while, but someone will eventually notice you and offer a hand. It still happens once in a while that an ex-prisoner is asked not to come back because “we don’t want your kind.” Leave politely, but keep trying elsewhere. God knows where that church stands and will guide you to a better one if you are persistent.

Once associated with a church, show your willingness to give back by offering your free time to cut the lawn for infirm members of the congregation, or helping them get their groceries. Just be sincere; do what your heart leads you to do and you will build real friends and supporters willing to help you put your past behind you and slide into a crime-free future.

## IX. Adjusting Expectations

*(adapted from materials prepared by Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants)*

**G**oing home? Worried about the ways that prison has changed you? Worried about adjusting to family life again and even to the unusual freedom of the outside? Here's a little food for thought as you make the transition.

You have been allowed to make very few decisions since entering the prison system. The demeaning environment may have damaged your self-esteem and confidence—overcrowding, noise, no privacy, physical danger have all left their mark. And while all these factors have been changing you, the people you know and love have also changed while you've been down. A clash of attitudes and changed personalities is probably waiting to happen. You'll need to keep a few things in mind to minimize the size of the clash and adjust to all the changes.

You may experience times of depression with resulting low energy. Don't confuse this with laziness. Allow yourself time to recover from the experiences of incarceration. You may have a hard time making decisions, even small ones like what to have for breakfast. It's normal, but you'll figure it out soon enough.

The plans and promises that you developed for yourself prior to release will



## Keep Busy

NOW THAT'S THE SAME ADVICE we give to someone heading for prison who wants to make it through a sentence and come back home. What gives?



“Idle hands are the Devil's workshop” may sound trite, but it is **true**. Any time you are busy, you are avoiding opportunities for your P.O. to yank your chain and send you back. Study, learn, work out, go to church. Fill your days and evenings with **positive activities**, and you will find yourself “too busy to get in trouble.” That is where we want this booklet to take you: “Too busy to be bad.”

not happen immediately. All around you life will seem to move very fast while your big plans seem to stand still. Temporary depression and indecision may interfere. You may experience flashbacks triggered by common events at unexpected times. You may prefer at the beginning of your freedom to avoid crowded, noisy situations such as malls and theaters.

Your interests may have changed completely. You may crave some food items and want to avoid others. You may have dental or medical problems that went untreated in prison. You may have difficulty being intimate with your spouse at first. Many ex-inmates feel that everyone knows they are ex-cons, as if the word were stamped on their foreheads, causing them to feel ashamed and awkward in social settings.

Family and friends on the outside have suffered along with you in different, but important ways. Don't minimize that or get into a comparing argument. In your absence your family may have been forced to become more independent and self-sufficient. To many returning ex-prisoners that feels and looks like they aren't needed or respected. Give yourself and your family time to adjust, and don't demand to assume a lot of responsibility or decision-making that perhaps was your domain before incarceration. Talk things through and find areas to compromise. Your family's newfound independence does not disappear simply because you come home—it was developed to survive just as you developed new survival instincts to get through prison. ■

## X. Making Decisions

by Becky Beane

**W**HEN PAT NOLAN got out of prison, some friends took him to lunch at a local deli. What was meant to be a simple, pleasant outing detoured into an excruciating debacle for Pat. As he recounts:

The waiter came over to take our orders. Everyone else told him what they wanted, but I kept poring over the menu. My eyes raced over the columns of choices. I knew that I was supposed to order, but the number of options overwhelmed me.

My friends sat in embarrassed silence. I was paralyzed. The waiter looked at me impatiently. I began to panic. How ridiculous that I wasn't able to do such a simple thing as order lunch. Finally, in desperation I ordered the next item my eyes landed on—a turkey sandwich. I didn't even want it, but at least it put an end to this embarrassing incident.

For two years I hadn't been allowed to make any choices about what I ate. Now I was having a hard time adjusting to the simple options most people face every day. If I had this much difficulty after only a couple of years in prison, think how hard it is for those inmates who haven't made any choices for 5, 10, or 15 years. When faced with a baffling array of options, is it any surprise that so many newly released prisoners make some bad choices and end up back in prison?

Before prison, Pat had served as a California assemblyman for 15 years. He had made countless significant decisions affecting legislation and people all across his state. But now he was taken down by a list of sandwich options.

Many other ex-prisoners have echoed Pat's distress over making even simple decisions when they first get out. Is it just the initial "culture shock" of being back in freedom, or is there more going on? And does the problem require intervention?

### Overwhelmed with choices

AFTER HAVING SO MANY of his actions dictated to him in prison—when to eat, what to eat, when to sleep, etc.—Pat felt overwhelmed by so many options on the deli menu, what might be called "choice overload."

Research shows that for people in general, not just prisoners, the initial attrac-

tiveness of "freedom of choice" causes internal conflict as the number of choices rises. In their 2000 study, "When Choice Is Demotivating," researchers Sheena Iyengar and Mark Lepper performed experiments to compare the effects of having to choose from an extensive array of options versus a limited set of options.

They discovered that extensive choices "undermine choosers' subsequent satisfaction and motivation." When given many choices (compared with a more limited number) people experience more frustration with the choice-making process and more regret about the choices they make.

The researchers state, "How can there be so much dissatisfaction in the face of so much opportunity? Perhaps it is not that people are made unhappy by the decision they make in the face of abundant options, but that they are instead unsure—that they are burdened by the responsibility of distinguishing good from bad decisions . . . one might expect people to be even more debilitated in contexts in which people feel more highly accountable for the choices."

This high-accountability pressure may especially effect newly released prisoners, who often sense people are scrutinizing them, expecting them to fail again.

When Pat went to the deli, his friends had probably been there before—they were familiar with the options, and they probably already had in mind some sandwich preferences. Had they gone to an untried restaurant where *all* of them confronted extensive unfamiliar options—say, for example, food of a particular ethnic group—all of the friends might have struggled with choice overload. In that context, Pat would not have felt so out of place.

### Accustomed to a regulated life

IN "IS THERE LIFE AFTER IMPRISONMENT?" British researchers note that prison causes "massive disruptions" in people's "normal lives." When someone sentenced to a long incarceration arrives at prison, "he has to come to terms with the fact that he is starting a new life . . . a prison life—and somehow he must learn to live it."

Conversely, being released from prison also causes massive disruptions in what by now has become the new "normal" for the prisoner.

In describing his own decision-making battle after two years in prison, Pat notes that those with longer sentences face an even tougher struggle. These are the ones most prone to become "habituated" to the prison environment. At the extreme, they become "institutionalized"—at which stage an inmate views prison as "home," has no desire to be in the outside world, and has lost all ability to make independent decisions.

But long before prisoners get to that stage of institutionalization, they can become dependent on the regimented prison routine, where daily choices of what

to wear, what to eat, where to go, and how to do an assigned job are determined by someone else. Prisoners still have some choice in their lifestyle, of course: Will they take a nap or watch TV in the day room this afternoon? But those choices are highly limited (the choice to watch TV may not include the choice of which *show* to watch, for example).

Habituation can have benefits in prison, but limitations on the outside. Having one way to do things means that if you stay within that restricted framework, you won't get into trouble with corrections officers. Such limits may feel frustrating at times, but they also feel *safe*. In the outside world, where there might be hundreds of brands to choose from or scores of ways to complete a particular project, those safeguards are suddenly stripped away. There is no one "right" choice; there may be many right choices among the wrong choices. But the habituated prisoner has lost much of the ability, and much of the *initiative*, to evaluate and discern the varying quality of options.

So while the *thought* of freedom may excite them, the unsettling *reality* of freedom often sends ex-prisoners searching for something familiar. Not prison, necessarily (though some released prisoners *do* deliberately commit crimes so they will be sent back behind bars). But they may return to pre-prison friends and hang-outs, where at least they understand and can fulfill the expectations.

### **In control or out of control?**

HOW PRISONERS ADAPT to the massive disruptions in their lives, both inside and outside prison, depends a lot on their "locus of control"—a term referring to a person's perceived control over events in his or her life. As researchers Lorraine Reitzel and Beverly Harju define: "Put simply, if people feel that they have control over the events that happen to them, they have an internal locus of control. Those who have an external locus feel as though they have little control over what happens and that luck or fate governs most of the events in their lives."

In their study of how locus of control influences inmates' adjustment to prison—particularly their level of depression—Reitzel and Harju found that those with a strong internal locus of control were least depressed. Depressive symptoms were most common among those with a strong external locus of control. These "high externals" tended to have a sense of helplessness in their evaluation of the prison setting, and were less adaptive in dealing with the stress of the environment. They endorsed such statements as "no matter how hard I try, the system won't give an inch" or "most of what happens to me in jail is out of my hands."

"Internals," on the other hand, were able to find advantages even to being in prison (such as the educational or treatment programs offered) and recognized

that the choices they made could affect their environment. (For example, their actions influenced how much respect correctional officers gave them). High internals demonstrated better problem-solving skills. They were also more likely to seek out services when in need.

Locus of control also influences ex-prisoners' ability to adapt to their return to the community. Newly released prisoners face significant challenges and struggles on the outside: Finding employment, housing, and a mode of transportation usually rank at the top of their list. Many prisoners encounter numerous rejections when they disclose their criminal record. High externals, who see themselves as powerless pawns, could become depressed, give up, or default to poor choices. High internals would tend to be more resilient, better able to cope with setbacks and consider new options, and stronger at problem-solving.

### **High anxiety**

FEELING OVERWHELMED by so many choices on the menu, Pat felt a bit of "panic" and perhaps even shame. He berated his indecisiveness as "ridiculous," which led to a feeling of "desperation" to make a decision, *any* decision. Pat's high level of anxiety and self-flagellation pressured him into making a careless choice.

In a 2008 study, "Emotional and Personality-Related Aspects of Career Decision-Making Difficulties," researchers focused on three common clusters of difficulties: pessimistic views, anxiety, and self-concept and identity. Both pessimism and anxiety were directly related to indecisiveness. The lower one's self-esteem or sense of self-worth, and the less stable one's sense of personal identity, the greater the difficulty in making decisions.

These emotional factors become even more exaggerated in prisoners with mental health problems, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The 2004 study "Damaged Goods: Exploring Predictors of Distress in Prison Inmates" notes that nearly 20 percent of U.S. prisoners have spent at least one night in a mental-health treatment facility or report a mental illness.

Prisoners who have been victimized in prison—by assault, rape, theft, vandalism—show increased symptoms of distress and depression. "Damaged Goods" reports that "exposure to trauma" negatively affects a prisoner's capacity for making good decisions. Victims of "inmate bullying" demonstrate poor thinking skills.

### **What do they think of me?**

THE DECISIONS we make are affected not only by our own emotions, but also by the emotions we perceive in others. As he struggled to make a sandwich choice, Pat perceived that his friends were embarrassed and that the waiter was

impatient with him. His interpretations may or may not have been correct. It did not matter. His *belief* that they were embarrassed and impatient increased his own embarrassment and impatience with himself. And because he could not persist through the pain of those feelings, he then rushed into a poor choice.

Research validates that other people's perceived anxiety or excitement may influence our own emotions and evaluations during decision making. One recent study is "Affecting Others: Social Appraisal and Emotion Contagion in Everyday Decision Making," by Oxford University researchers Brian Parkinson and Gwenda Simmons. They state that transfer of emotions "based on social appraisal occurs because someone else's perceived affect [emotion] carries information that alters our appraisal of the emotional meaning of what is happening." Emotional contagion refers to "catch[ing] another person's affect automatically and without necessarily registering its personal significance."

Again, let's look at Pat's deli dilemma. Pat perceived the waiter's impatience but did not take time to "register" its significance. What difference did it make if the waiter was impatient? It was his *responsibility* to serve the deli customers and bring them what they want. His impatience (if Pat's perception was correct) might reflect a weakness in the waiter, but certainly not in *Pat*.

However, in the anxiety of the moment, we may not take the time for such evaluation. Among newly released prisoners, already typically fearful about the odds for failure, the added anxiety of looking like a loser in front of others can push them into making premature—and unsatisfactory—choices.

Sometimes the consequences aren't so bad. Pat's anxious selection of a turkey sandwich didn't give him much enjoyment, but it certainly wasn't harmful. On the other hand, suppose an ex-prisoner believes his wife is frustrated that he isn't pulling his financial weight in the family. He may take a job working in a bar just to ease that feeling of frustration and anxiety—without carefully evaluating the temptations that could ensnare him at that work site.

### **Mental energy drain**

RESEARCH SHOWS that "people tire of the endless demands for choice and the stress of decision making." In their article, "Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control," Kathleen Vohs and colleagues describe several studies they conducted to gauge the effects of decision making on subsequent "self-regulation." This refers to a person's ability to override one powerful response with another response that helps him or her "attain goals and conform to standards."

They found that "self-regulation, active initiative, and effortful choosing draw on the same psychological resources. Making decisions depletes that resource,

thereby weakening the subsequent capacity for self-control and active initiative . . . It has also led to greater passivity." Depleted by the effort of making a choice— weakened even more by the fear of appearing foolish in the eyes of his friends— Pat gave up and passively "selected" the next item he saw on the menu, an unwanted turkey sandwich.

What this means for prisoners is that the initial transition to the outside world, where they are suddenly hit by countless unfamiliar choices, can make them extremely vulnerable to making *poor* choices and engaging in *negative* behaviors—simply because they lose the mental strength for persistence and self-control. If ex-prisoner Jack exerts so much energy just trying to choose which meal to order or which toothpaste brand to buy, what energy will he have left to pursue job leads or, once he finds a job, to get up and get to work on time? It's far less demanding to go back to his old buddies, who can help Jack renew his old "job" of dealing drugs on his own time schedule!

### **Dysfunctional thinking patterns**

BACK IN THE 1970S, psychiatrist Samuel Yochelson and clinical psychologist Stanton Samenow completed a landmark 16-year study on the criminal personality. Based on extensive interviews with prisoners, they delineated 52 "thinking errors" that underlie offenders' maladaptive behavior. Among these 52 errors: compartmentalized thinking, manipulativeness, impulsiveness, and refusal to be dependent on others.

In 2007, drawing upon Yochelson's and Samenow's work—in addition to subsequent studies—researchers Jon Mandracchia and colleagues came up with a more concise three-factor model of dysfunctional thinking patterns that are prevalent in offenders. The three factors relate to control, cognitive immaturity, and egocentrism.

As they explain in "Inmate Thinking Patterns: An Empirical Study," control covers thinking patterns that reflect "a desire for power in all aspects of life." Immature cognitive tactics include "using generalizations and labels for others and the environment, believing that one knows what another is thinking, rejecting responsibility . . . and relying on emotions for judgment even when contrary evidence exists." Egocentrism refers to thinking patterns focusing intently on the self—such as "avoiding acting responsibly because of a belief in one's own incompetence" and "being self-righteous, closed-minded, and secretive."

Pat wasn't a career criminal; he went to prison once after being caught up in an FBI sting. Misjudgment may have led to his incarceration, but he lacked what could be termed a "criminal mind." Repeat prisoners, however—those caught in a

cycle of criminal activity—demonstrate persistent dysfunctional thinking patterns.

What is especially problematic, as researchers have consistently discovered, is that such offenders are usually *unaware* of the erroneous nature of their thinking. And unless these thinking patterns are exposed and modified, released prisoners will continue to make poor decisions that can re-ignite criminal behaviors.

## What can help?

PAT NOLAN regained his decision-making skills, as family and fiends patiently supported him through his early angst-ridden adjustments. Today Pat serves as a vice-president with Prison Fellowship, advocating for criminal justice reforms.

Here are some ways to help ease ex-prisoners' struggles with decision making. If *you* are the one getting out soon, show this list to a few friends or mentors, so they can understand what you're going through and help you through these struggles.

- Lessen the number of choices. Before going to a restaurant, for example, ask the ex-prisoner what kind of food he or she prefers. If the answer is “a good steak” or “Italian,” choose a place that suits the preference.

- Give time to choose. Order an appetizer everyone can share while the ex-prisoner studies the menu. Patiently encourage the prisoner to try on as many pairs of pants as he wants on a shopping excursion. Plan accordingly so you're not in a rush.

- Encourage proper self-care—nutrition, exercise, rest—to build up internal “self-regulation” resources. Remember, making decisions depletes mental energy.

- Help the ex-prisoner find appropriate professional resources. This might include mental-health counseling to help with issues of anxiety or depression, or career counseling to help determine suitable employment options and enhance decision-making skills.

- For significant choices (employment opportunities, housing options), help the ex-prisoner think through pros and cons of the various options. Don't make the choice for the ex-prisoner, but ask questions that will help him or her make a responsible choice. “What are the benefits of that job? What might be some limitations? Without a car, what are some ways you could get to your job?” Suggest options he or she may not have considered.

- Provide training (best if begun while people are still *in* prison) in decision-making skills to help prisoners understand their thinking patterns, identify erroneous ways of thinking, and learn more effective ways of thinking. Some people may also require professional counseling; cognitive behavioral

therapists specialize in helping people modify unhealthy thinking patterns, which in turn will change their actions.

- Provide a support structure for the ex-prisoner—a mentor, a church family, an accountability group, etc. Ex-prisoners need people to believe in them and to help give them guidance and a base of security in the midst of so many challenges and adjustments. A study called “Keepin’ My Mind Right” found that “the manner in which religious inmates accomplished the task of staying on track and coping with confinement was primarily social”—such as connecting with “positive others” who shared their religious values. The importance of positive, supportive relationships certainly carries over into reintegration into the community.

- Encourage their relationship with God—the One who gives wisdom, who loves them unconditionally, who forgives when they go astray, who picks them up when they stumble and sets them back on the right path, who calms their fears with His perfect love, and who transforms them through the renewing of their minds. ■

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## XI. Employment

Every ex-prisoner has a variety of needs as he or she enters the free world again. Topping the list because they are of immediate concern are the physical needs: a place to live, clothes, transportation, food, and of course work. Work often determines the quality of the other physical needs because money buys the necessities of life. It's likely you'll depend on the kindness and charity of others for one or more of your physical needs for a short time until you find work and receive that first paycheck. The information in this section is designed to answer some frequently asked questions about employment and steer you in the right direction as you carry out your search.

### Frequently Asked Questions: Why Work?

(from *The Job Search*, by Stephan Likosky)

The first question an ex-inmate needs to ask him or herself upon being released is, "Am I ready to work?" The answer is not as simple as might first appear. If it were posed, instead, as "Do I need to make money?" or "Do I need a job?" a simple "yes" would quickly suffice. But, being ready to work raises issues other than just a willingness to earn money. In order to succeed in the "outside" world, many of us need to do a lot of critical thinking about ourselves, and how hard we are willing to work at staying out of prison, a place to which, according to statistics, no small number of us will be returning.

So, let us begin with the most obvious question of all, and that is, "Why work?" On the negative side, work means sacrifice. It requires waking up early every day, and getting to work on time. It means, for many of us, beginning at a weekly salary, the amount of which we could probably earn illegally in one fifth the time selling drugs on the corner. Work also means having to muster up or develop enough self-discipline to keep our tempers under control, follow orders that may make little sense to us, and concentrate carefully on a single job assignment for long stretches of time.

Now let's look at the arguments on the positive side. The first, and for many the most pressing, answer to the question, "Why work?" is: "It will keep me out

of jail." Now, I'm sure no one needs to be told, at least while incarcerated, that jail isn't a very nice place to be. What happens, however, for some of us, is that once out in the streets, we choose to forget our jail experience, and before we know it, we're back to the same old patterns of destructive behavior. "I'm going to be the exception this time," we reason, "the person who won't get caught." Those who think this way choose to ignore the hundreds of thousands of [current prisoners] who thought the same thing. When committing an illegal act, who ever plans on getting caught and going to jail? So, when we need that extra shot of incentive, it's good to think back to our prison experience, the regimented life behind the walls, the lack of contact with family and friends, the relentless tensions and boredom to which we've been forcibly subjected, and to remember that a job, at the very least, will help keep us functioning on the outside—where we can proceed to get our lives together. For most of us, getting and maintaining that first job after release will be an accomplishment of which we can be proud.

Another reason why work is important is it allows us to reclaim responsibility for our lives. In prison, we had little or no control over most decisions which affected us—what programs to enroll in, for example, what kinds of food to eat at mealtime, or how and when we might enjoy our privacy. We were forced to become dependent on others for fulfilling even the most basic of human needs.

Once out in the streets, however, we have freedom to decide how we would like to conduct our lives. We have within us the power to make innumerable choices: where to work, with whom to live, which television station to watch, what to eat for dinner, etc. Of course, some of our choices may be limited by such factors as our financial situation, the skills we have, or the opportunities that knock at our door. Still, with determination and some good planning, we can utilize our work experience to broaden our options and, as time goes on, create new possibilities for ourselves. In this way, holding a job not only proves to us and to others that after being dependent for so long on others we're capable of directing our own lives, but it promises, also, to reward us with growing financial returns, which can translate into the support needed for raising a family, new opportunities to return to school, and much more we might define as desirable.

Lastly, work enables us to enrich our lives. It exposes us to a variety of new people and experiences. It teaches us skills that can prove beneficial in our career development later on, and it can give us a sense of pride and accomplishment in knowing at the end of a day, we've done our job, and done it well.

Once we've decided we're committed to finding work, it is helpful to examine some of the negative attitudes that we may have about ourselves. Such attitudes, otherwise, will surely frustrate our efforts, and no job counselor, no matter how

adept, or job hunting guide, however well written, would then serve much use. The negative attitudes most commonly heard are:

*I'm an ex-con; no one will hire me.*

*I have no skills.*

*I don't want any dead-end or low-paying job.*

### ***“I'm an ex-con; no one will hire me.”***

THIS ARGUMENT CAN BE DISMISSED as being simply untrue. In fact, it only serves to keep us in a cycle of self-defeat, and to justify a decision to do nothing at all to better ourselves. Remember that many people with criminal records, or drug histories for that matter, are now gainfully employed at all levels of society. The key to their success is their having developed a better sense of their own self-worth. The past is gone. Let's not forget that we've done our time and paid our debt to society. We now have as much right to work as any other person. It's true that finding work is not easy, and discrimination does exist. However, there are laws to protect us, as ex-offenders (or ex-addicts), from being discriminated against. Also, with a little preparation, we can learn techniques to avoid job discrimination or, if confronted with it, successfully combat it.

### ***“I have no skills.”***

THIS SECOND STATEMENT IS, LIKE THE FIRST, CATEGORICALLY UNTRUE. There is no such thing as a person with no skills. We have all acquired skills, even if they are not job related. A typical homemaker, for example, in caring for her family, is likely to have had experience in family budgeting, child care, and cooking, all skills which can be of use to her in obtaining a paying job. Many individuals, similarly, have developed skills in caring for cars, helping to raise children, or maybe painting and plastering an apartment. The trick here is to examine our past experiences, preferably with the aid of a job counselor, to determine just what skills we do possess and to what types of jobs they can be most applicable. We will then be much more able to persuade potential employers how we can be of value to them.

### ***“I don't want any dead-end or low-paying job.”***

WE CAN CERTAINLY SYMPATHIZE with the person who doesn't want to work at a low-paying or dead-end job. Yet, the reality is, many of us have to start our careers at entry-level positions, or at least take such jobs for a period of time. It is important to be aware of a couple of things in this regard. First, many employers insist that new workers begin at the bottom and work their way up. This enables



the employer to better judge the work qualities of a person before granting him or her more responsibilities. Second, dead-end jobs, or low-paying jobs, do serve some purpose: they help us pay our bills, afford us some work experience, and may provide us with some important contacts for further employment. If we must take a low-level position, let's try always to have some long-range goals set for ourselves. Our job can then be seen as only a small step in our overall plans and need not be viewed as permanent. Above all, avoid the attitude, “I'll never take such a low-paying job.” For the vast majority of us, there are no easy ways of getting rich fast; if there were, you wouldn't be reading this at the moment, and I wouldn't be here writing it!

For a lot of us, surviving in the “outside” world can be very scary—especially if we've been behind bars for much of our lives. We may find ourselves having to adjust to a whole new style in the way we interrelate with others. If we are willing to be ourselves, however, and to deal with others sincerely, we have overcome the biggest challenge. Remember, always, that there is never any reason to be defensive about who we are, or apologetic. We made mistakes, as have others, and we have paid for them. Our task now is to retake control over our lives, remembering that the decision as to whether or not we return to prison will rest, ultimately, with us as individuals, not with our parole officers, our friends and families, or outside society. Finding a job, and holding on to it, will be the first important step for most of us in readjusting. ■

# Can an employer consider an applicant's criminal record?

(This and the next three questions were prepared by Debbie Mukamal for the Department of Labor.)

**E**mployers may consider an applicant's conviction record and, in some cases, a person's arrest record. Generally, employers are permitted to ask job applicants if they have ever been convicted of an offense, and employers may legally consider an applicant's conviction(s) in making hiring decisions. If an applicant fails to disclose such information or misrepresents the information, and the employer discovers the deception, the individual can be legally fired.

Some states, such as New York, have passed legislation forbidding most employers from considering arrest information when making an employment decision and from inquiring whether an applicant has ever been arrested. You should check with your state's attorney general to see if there are any limits on what an employer can ask and consider about a person's criminal background.

## **Q. What occupations may exclude people with criminal records?**

**A.** Although it is generally illegal for an employer to impose a flat ban against hiring ex-offenders, some employers are forbidden from hiring ex-offenders for certain jobs and are mandated to perform background checks before hiring a job applicant. The types of jobs with legal prohibitions against ex-offenders tend to be in the fields of childcare, education, security, nursing and home health care, where "vulnerable" populations are involved. These restrictions are established by state law, so you should contact your state's attorney general to determine the occupations and types of convictions that are affected by occupational prohibitions. (See Appendix C.)

## **Q. How do employers learn about a person's criminal record?**

**A.** The easiest way for employers to find out whether an applicant has a conviction history is to ask about it on a job application or during an interview. Although many employers are not required to conduct a background check on job applicants, many do perform checks and have easy access to applicants' criminal histories through credit reporting agencies and other investigative services. Under the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, consumer agencies are limited to providing criminal record information about a job applicant's arrests and convictions over the last seven years, unless the job has a salary of \$75,000 or more. If



the employer decides not to hire an applicant because of information found on the credit report, he or she must give the individual the opportunity to see the report. Your state may have a law that further limits the type of consumer information that can be included in the credit report. It is wise to check with a lawyer or consumer agency in your state about the allowable uses of consumer reports.

## **Q. Are there any state laws that protect ex-offenders from employment discrimination?**

**A.** Several states have laws that limit how and under what circumstances an employer may consider an applicant's criminal record. These laws make it illegal for an employer to discriminate against an ex-offender unless his or her conviction record is related to the duties of the job. Factors that are generally considered include the time that has elapsed since the offense, the person's age at the time of the crime, the seriousness of the offense, the person's efforts toward rehabilitation, and the employer's interest in protecting the property and welfare of the workplace or the general public. For instance, if a job applicant who had a prior conviction for drug possession applied for a position as a food service worker, the employer probably should not be permitted to deny him employment based solely on his criminal record. To determine whether your state provides any protection to ex-offenders from employment discrimination, you should contact your state's attorney general.

Some states have tried to mitigate the stigma, as well as some of the legal barriers, associated with criminal histories by allowing ex-offenders to seal or expunge their criminal records or by offering certificates of rehabilitation to ex-offenders who either have minimal criminal histories or have remained out of the criminal justice system for specified periods of time. Depending on your state's law, certain criminal information may be sealed or expunged, thus restricting who has access to the information. In addition, certificates of rehabilitation, which create a presumption of rehabilitation, are helpful, if not crucial, to securing employment with public agencies and removing bars to obtaining licenses. It may be useful to note that Welfare-to-Work, Workforce Investment Act, and, in certain situations, TANF funds can be used to cover the costs of sealing or expunging records or of obtaining certificates of rehabilitation. To find out if and how your state permits ex-offenders to seal or expunge their criminal records or obtain certificates of rehabilitation, contact your state's repository of criminal records. (See Appendix A: State Repositories of Criminal Records.)

**Q. Are there federal laws that protect ex-offenders from employment discrimination?**

**A.** Federal, state, and local welfare programs consider the process of moving individuals from welfare to work as a partnership in which employers are important allies. One of the fundamental purposes of welfare reform is to help needy parents achieve self-sufficiency through employment. For the efforts to be successful, job placements must meet the business needs of employer partners. However, in carrying out these efforts, some cases of unlawful discrimination may occur.

Even if your state does not have a specific anti-discrimination law, federal law, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which is enforced by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC]) would govern employment activities. Title VII prohibits private employers and state and local governments from discriminating in employment decisions on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, or religion. The EEOC has determined that policies that exclude individuals from employment on the basis of their arrest and conviction records may violate Title VII because such policies disproportionately exclude minorities, in light of statistics showing they are arrested and convicted at a rate significantly in excess of their representation in the population.

According to the EEOC, exclusion on the basis of conviction records violates Title VII unless there is a business necessity for the employment decision. To establish this, the employer must show that it considered three factors in making

the exclusionary employment decision: (1) the nature and gravity of the offense(s); (2) the time that has passed since the conviction and/or completion of the sentence; and (3) the nature of the job held or sought. Thus, business necessity can be established where the applicant has a fairly recent conviction for particularly egregious conduct that is related to the job in question.

Employers also cannot use arrest records to exclude persons from employment unless there is a business justification. If it can be demonstrated that the applicant actually engaged in the conduct for which he or she was arrested and that the conduct is job-related and relatively recent, the exclusion would be justified. As specified in the EEOC guidance, "[t]he employer is required to allow the person a meaningful opportunity to explain the circumstances of the arrest(s) and to make a reasonable effort to determine whether the explanation is credible before eliminating him/her from employment opportunities." Program participants who may consider a legal challenge as one of their options need to know that these types of claims are often time-consuming, expensive, and difficult. Such cases are decided on an individual basis, and legal representation may be hard for them to find. In the end, they may find that working with you on other strategies which build upon specific employers as program partners may prove more effective in getting placed into an unsubsidized job.

**Q. Can I find work on the Internet?**

**A.** Boy, can you. A growing number of websites feature thousands of job listings across the country, and some will post your résumé. Most companies with a website list whether they have any job openings. There are other websites dedicated to collecting all possible job listings for a specific career track, for example, accounting or media jobs. Get on line and check it out. If you do not have a computer, most public libraries will have one you can use to "surf the Web." A few places to start: **monster.com**, **hotjobs.com**, **cruelworld.com**, **careerbuilder.com**. It's a whole new way of looking at the classifieds.

**Q. What is Federal Bonding and how can I get it?**

**A.** A fidelity bond is a special kind of insurance policy that protects an employer against any business losses due to employee theft of money or property. Many employers require their employees to be bondable.

But insurance companies can consider ex-prisoners too risky to insure under fidelity bonds. This means that an ex-prisoner is often not bondable and denied employment. To deal with that problem, the U.S. Department of Labor created

the Federal Bonding Program. The program issues a special fidelity bond to insure ex-prisoners.

Travelers Property and Casualty backs this bond. It is issued free for one year. If the person bonded proves to be an honest employee during that year, Travelers will sell the bond in future years at a regular commercial rate.

To be eligible for this Federal Bonding Program, you need only to be qualified to perform the duties of the job opening, and to be offered full-time work (defined as at least 30 hours per week). The bonding can be in effect on the first day of work. You can apply for the Federal Bonding Program by contacting any local office of your state's employment service (1-877-US2Jobs). Also ask for the name and phone number of the state bonding coordinator. Take the coordinator's name and number to the employment office when you go. They may not know about the Federal Bonding Program. Tell them you can be bonded.

This federal bonding won't cost you or your employer anything—so mention it as a plus to an employer who may consider hiring you.

For more information write to: *The Federal Bonding Program, 1725 DeSales St. NW, Suite 700, Washington DC 20036.* 1-800-233-2258. [www.bonds4jobs.com](http://www.bonds4jobs.com)

### **Q. What is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program?**

**A.** The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program (WOTC) provides tax credits to employers who hire from a group of people who typically have a hard time getting jobs. Employers who hire economically disadvantaged ex-prisoners qualify for this program. They must be hired no more than five years after release from prison or the date of conviction for a felony.

An employer can receive a tax break of up to \$2,400 by hiring an ex-prisoner and providing employment for at least one year. There is no tax credit if the job doesn't last at least 90 days or 120 work hours. Jobs obtained through WOTC often become permanent and lead to promotions and better jobs. All this means an employer might be more willing to hire an ex-prisoner to get a tax break for the company. Apply for this program through your local office of the State Employment Service. Ask to have your WOTC eligibility completed. Also ask for a job opening referral. You may not get one right away, but always ask.

Be sure to tell a possible employer about the WOTC, because the employer must apply for the tax credit on or before the date you begin work. ■

## Writing a Résumé

*By Stephan Likosky from The Job Search*

**W**hat is a résumé? A résumé, or fact sheet, is a summary of your work experience, education, and special interest. It organizes the relevant facts about you in written form and shows the prospective employer what you have done and are able to do.

### **Why a résumé?**

- More and more employers are now requiring that you have a résumé when applying for a job.
- A résumé is a written presentation of you to the employer, and as such, can help you gain entry to a personal interview.
- A résumé serves as a visual reminder for the employer, after the interview, of who you are and what you discussed.
- A résumé, even if you were never to show it to anyone, helps you organize your thinking about yourself and what you have to offer.

### **Need help writing a résumé?**

BECAUSE A WELL-WRITTEN résumé is so important in job hunting, it is often a good idea to get some expert help or criticism in writing one. Try visiting your public library's job information center, for example, or an employment counseling service, where you will find materials on how to write a résumé, plus sample resumé, from which you can choose a model appropriate for you. Also, specially trained staff will be able to look over what you have written and help you strengthen those parts of your résumé that need improvement.

Two of the many websites offering good advice on how to prepare resumé and cover letters are: [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com) and [www.how-to-write-a-resume.org](http://www.how-to-write-a-resume.org).

A résumé should be neat in appearance and should always be typed.

There are many job hunters who have little formal education or job-related experience. Perhaps they've spent many years in foster homes or prisons, perhaps they've worked illegally, or maybe they've had a number of jobs, but, due to a personal or drug-related problem, were never able to hold one for very long. They will need to evaluate their life experiences carefully in terms of the skills they have invariably picked up, and will need to learn techniques on how to present themselves in the most positive light to employers. There are some résumé-writing books and job counselors available to help them. ■

# Get Ready to Work: How to Find a Job Even with Ex-Con on Your Résumé

by Jeff Peck

**W**hen Folsom correction officials released Tim Kepler after a seven-month prison term for drug offenses, he didn't have many choices. Both parents were dead. He had no job and no home. He desperately wanted to clean up his life, but instead found his way to his brother's girlfriend's apartment. Within 24 hours he'd spent his gate money on drugs and was flying high—but bitterly disappointed with his life.

The problem of finding work after prison plagues the most optimistic parolee. Where do you find work? How do you find it? A job is central to success in life after prison, but for many like Tim, seemingly impossible to find. No quick fix exists to this dilemma, but there is hope for those who want it.

## Where to look for jobs

FOR MANY, the hardest part of looking for a job is getting started. Here are some practical ideas. It may seem obvious, but go back to where you worked before and ask if they can rehire you. If your offense was unrelated to work (and there are no employees there to trip you up by feeding possible addictions), your employer may consider hiring you back. It's a place where people know you.

Perhaps you never held a steady job in your life. A lot of guys slung bags and worked the "alternate" economy. In that case, start looking for companies that hire ex-offenders. That will be a better use of time, rather than randomly applying anywhere and taking a lot of rejection.

How do you look for these companies? Everybody knows a person who got out and started working. Ask them. Ask your parole officer. POs often have a list of employers who use day labor (moving, construction). That can get you started working. Often those jobs can go permanent for those who are hard workers and show up on time. Another place to look for minimum-wage work is temporary agencies. There can be slots for certain kinds of work where your record isn't an issue. Again, many temporary jobs turn into permanent positions for faithful service. And there is always hanging out on the job corner. Ask around to find out where they're located. Many ex-prisoners have been picked up by contractors looking for day labor who later hired them for more regular work.

The service sector is still a good place to look because it doesn't require technical skills. Sure bussing tables or parking cars is less zippy than a professional position, but you've got to start somewhere if you don't have any training in areas like finance, carpentry, or welding, for example.

In addition to going back to a former employer and locating companies that hire ex-offenders, a third place to look is with your friends and family. You can take advantage of these leads even before you get out of prison. Prisons are overcrowded, and many parole boards are looking for good candidates to kick loose to make room. Good candidates for parole are those who show they have a job waiting for them. How do you pull that off?

If you have a trustworthy relationship with your wife, girlfriend, or best friend, respectfully ask that person to give you a recommendation where he or she works and secure you the promise of a job. Believe it or not, one aftercare expert estimates that 30 percent of ex-offenders find work this way. But be careful not to abuse the trust of your friend or the employer. If you don't make parole, follow up by apologizing to the employer so he knows not to wait for you. This gesture takes the heat off your friend who went to bat to get you the job, and it demonstrates to the employer that you have a sense of responsibility.

And don't be like other prisoners, quick to quit a job after a day or a week, leaving both the employer and the friend feeling used. If that happens, or if you fail to follow up after a parole rejection, that employer may be less likely to entertain giving any other ex-prisoner a chance.

## Networking for life

THE KEY TO ANY JOB SEARCH in today's world is to keep making contacts. People hire people they know or who are recommended by someone they know. Submitting a résumé blind rarely attracts an employer's eye.

Lew Acosta, an ex-prisoner from New York, found that his bailbondsman was willing to sponsor Lew's first radio show. Later he worked for several temp agencies. Each one picked him up based on the personal recommendations of people Lew knew. Networking is really just keeping in touch with people and asking them to think of you as you look for work. For many, it will mean breaking a tough old habit—isolation. Isolation doesn't require as much work as getting up some energy to meet new people and make new friends

## The gold standard

EX-PRISONER AL LAWRENCE has worked in reentry for 18 years helping guys coming out to rebuild their lives on the outside. He noted several tough problems



ex-prisoners face when looking for work, but also made the startling personal observation that “I have never seen a guy not get a job who bought into a relationship with a church.”

Many churches post job boards to help members, and pastors have a wide network of people they know in the community who can offer jobs, but it goes much deeper than that. As Al explained from his observations, every ex-prisoner who really got involved in the life of a church received help finding not only work, but also housing and help with the transition from prison to the free world. He observed that “anyone approaching it *alone* is like the fellow who represents himself in court. Lawyers say that man has a fool for a client. You’ve been living on prison time where fantasy prevails. You got to learn a new pace, and converting is hard to do by yourself.”

For earnest job-seekers, a church can make all the difference getting you through those first 30 days. For Tim Kepler, it was a church he attended a week after getting high that stepped into his life. Today, after more than 10 years, he can look back on a successful painting business, 10 years of marriage, and a blossoming music career.

Working a real job comes with some annoying responsibilities: You have to pay taxes, get up early, fight traffic, work long hours, and deal with difficult people. It’s just part of the price of freedom. But jobs also pay your bills, buy your food and clothes, build self-confidence, and can lead to promotions and raises. For those who stick it out, using freedom to work yields rewards that far exceed the comforts of a prison cell.

## Top 10 interview tips

THE JOB INTERVIEW is a big moment for anyone regardless of background. We all get nervous and hope we can impress the employer that we’re the one they want. You’re on an emotional roller coaster wondering what kind of impression you’ll make. Here are some tips to help you make the best impression possible.

**1 Be on time.** Give yourself plenty of extra time to get there so you can relax and catch your breath. Remember, you may have a bad bus connection, be delayed by bad weather, or get lost.

**2 Bring your references and all necessary papers.** Even if you’ve already given the company the names and numbers of your references, bring them anyway. If the employer has misplaced your file, you don’t want the interviewer wasting time hunting for your info. Give it to them again if asked. Also, bring your ID, and proof of legal work status (if needed).

**3 Go into the interview alone.** If someone drives you, ask the person to wait in the car or at a nearby coffee shop. If the company has a reception area, the person might wait there. Don’t take children or teens with you to an interview. Find someone to watch them.

**4 Look the interviewer in the eye.** Show interest and confidence. Eye contact is telling. Staring at the floor or out the window says nothing good. Listen to questions and answer them as best you can. Stick to the subject.

**5 Don’t make excuses.** If you talk about past failures, talk about lessons learned. Take responsibility and switch to talking about your strengths.

**6 Watch your body language.** Don’t fold your arms in front of you like a wall separating you from the interviewer. Most of the time leave your hands in your lap. Don’t slouch in a chair or lean back. Sit up straight or lean slightly forward. Don’t chew gum, smoke, tap your shoe, or fidget. This is why we said be on time. Give yourself time to relax before you go in.

**7 Don’t ever interrupt when the interviewer is talking to you.** Enough said.

**8 Be positive!** Don’t complain about the prison system, about a former boss, the weather, or a bad rap.

**9 Ask about the next step.** Before getting up to leave, ask what is the next step. Then, smile and shake hands firmly while making eye contact.

**10 Write a thank-you letter.** This will set you apart from almost any other candidate. This rarely used interview technique is very effective at getting you noticed and remembered. It tells the interviewer you’re interested and enjoyed talking with him or her. As you leave, be sure to pick up their business card with the mailing address on it. ■

## XII. Your Friendly P.O.

Few prisoners serve absolutely full term today. Most will be released into the custody of a Parole Officer who will closely monitor your time on parole. There is something crucial to remember about parole: Time on parole is the same as time in prison. The system believes it is giving you a break when it puts you on parole. Actually, it just needs your bed, and it has someone who is a greater risk than you to put in that bed. It's nothing special that you have done.

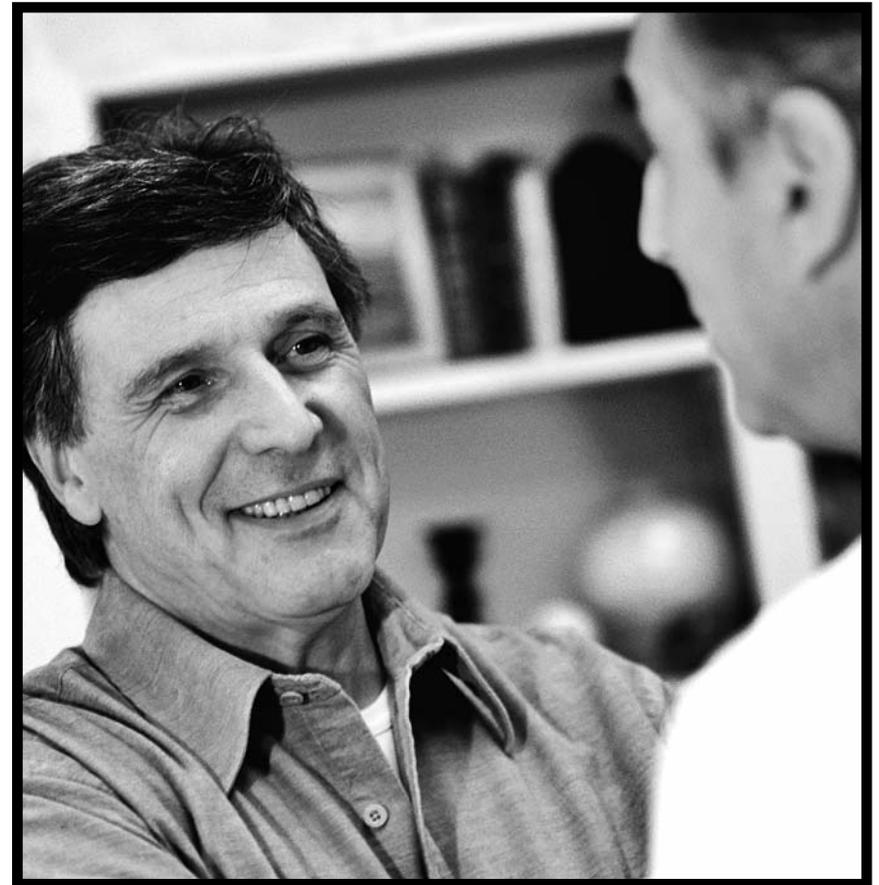
So it temporarily “stores” you outside of prison, in a halfway house, or in your own home. Some place where you can be found at expected hours and where you promise to be good. (Remember, the word *parole* comes from the French, and means “to give a promise.”) You are promising to be good, so the system cuts you a little slack. Break your promise or any one of the rules established by your P.O., and you will find yourself in violation of your parole or promise and subject to completing the remainder of your sentence back inside.

When we are placed alone somewhere, there is always a temptation to test the envelope—how far can we push and get away with it? Not far. You will find your P.O. has already heard every lame excuse in the world for violating parole and being sent back.

Here are some of the obvious requirements of your parole:

- **You must always be available.** Your P.O. must be able to reach you easily by phone, at work or at home. They like to do random drug and alcohol testing at the strangest hours!
- **You must pass those tests, each and every time.** Fail once and back you go. Otherwise clean inmates have been returned to prison for using alcohol-laced mouthwashes or eating pastry goods with poppy seeds that produce a positive result on a drug test.
- **You need a place to live.** It might be a nice home of your own, a flophouse apartment, a halfway house, or a shelter. But you must have a fixed address.
- **You are expected to find a job.** You will likely have to pay rent and buy food. Getting around between the home and job usually means a car or bus fare.
- **You are expected to associate only with “good” people,** not the same baddies who got you into trouble in the first place.
- **You will not own or have easily available to you any form of a firearm.**

Those are the absolute requirements. Here is an additional list of some kinds of optional **good behavior** that parole officers like to see:



- **Ask someone to help “keep watch” over you.** This can be a spouse, pastor, or good friend. But you need someone who is as interested in keeping you from returning to prison as you are. It's called “accountability.” Just like an AA buddy, if you start thinking about doing something that can easily get you violated, call for back-up: someone who will talk you out of it. A good spouse or friend will be tougher on you than any parole officer—learn to call that person whenever you are tempted.

- **Be sure you understand every single one of your parole restrictions.** If you aren't clear, ask your P.O. to spell them out carefully while you take notes. Some P.O.s will limit your ability to travel. It's a truly rotten feeling to suddenly realize you are 200 miles out of bounds because you forgot to ask for permission to travel. Your heart will suffer while you worry about carefully and slowly driving back to your zone before a local cop stops you for who knows what?

- **Have your documents in order before leaving prison if you can.** If not, then do it the moment you are free—forget the party. Items you will need right up front include your Social Security card, a driver’s license, a birth certificate (to get a new driver’s license), and your Honorable Discharge if you had military service.

- **Have any documentation showing education level** (high school diploma, GED) or certificates of special skill training, such as welding or truck driving. Nothing says that the first job after release is what you will be doing the rest of your life. Just do something that is legal and brings in reasonable cash. Be ready to seize the first opportunity to move upward by demonstrating learned skills, good work habits, and job experience. Look at it this way: The more trouble-free days you put between your release date and today, the less chance you will be



going back to prison. They say it takes 21 days for a new pattern of behavior to become a habit. Go for 21 on the positive items and then some.

- **Get a calendar. Mark off each day without any problem as a Victory Day.** Build it up: one month, six months, a year. A positive record causes both your P.O. and a potential super employer to look upon you more favorably for early discharge from

parole (yes, they can grant it, P.O.s are Officers of the Court) and getting a job that could carry you upward through a career despite the conviction on your record. If you see cracks in any sidewalk, carefully step over them.

- **Network.** Make new friends and avoid the old ones who got you into trouble in the first place. Go to church. Let’s say that one again: GO TO CHURCH! You will not only build a spiritual relationship with God, but also gain a value system designed to keep you out of trouble. Finally, you will find friendly people available to help you out with a place to live, a clunker to drive, some used furniture, and perhaps even a job.

If you feel a need to celebrate freedom with a party and alcohol, save it for your release from parole date, not your release from prison date. Note once more—days spent on parole count as prison days; if you want to spend those days actually inside the prison, the state will happily oblige you. Switch from prison thinking to free-world thinking only when you have that piece of paper in your hand with the magic word “Discharged” on it. ■

## XIII. Overcoming Your Itchy Trigger Finger

### How to Recognize and Resist Urges That Lead to Reincarceration

by John Leonardson

**P**ulling the trigger on a gun fires a bullet you cannot take back. When triggers go off in your life, the results can be just as certain. How can an ex-prisoner (or any person) start his morning out on the right track, but relapse by nightfall? Just a few months ago, an ex-prisoner I know had a pleasant place to live, good pay, a van, and big plans. While driving in his neighborhood, he spotted a woman hitchhiking and, with mixed motives, picked her up. But one hour later he was smoking crack and having sex with this stranger. Within a month he lost everything and was back in prison.



What triggered this? Like most men, he had sex on his mind that day, and it was something he’d struggled with before incarceration. The sight of the hitchhiker triggered his fall. Another man told me construction sites were his trigger. This seemed strange until I learned he’d robbed every construction site in the area at least once. The mere sight of construction equipment was too much for him.

Singer Bob Dylan wrote, “You start out standing, proud to steal her anything she sees, but you wind up peeping through her keyhole down upon your knees.” Addictions start out being thrilling, but end up degrading. How do such triggers manage to trip up someone trying to “make it” after prison? What steps are necessary to overcome these triggers?

#### Cues to catastrophe

A TRIGGER IS ANYTHING that moves a person toward relapse. Triggers can range from the obvious, like smelling marijuana or walking into a bar, to more subtle cues, like hearing a particular song on the radio or driving in certain parts of town. Triggers range from powerful almost irresistible influences to faint cues

that pass easily. Learning what moves us in the wrong direction is vital to gaining control over destructive desires.

Warning signs usually precede relapse long before the actual event. Become familiar with your patterns of behavior and thought. By taking a daily inventory, you can take the necessary action and seek help before the problem gets out of hand. For example, if your problem is illegitimate sex, you must avoid R-rated movies (and provocative TV) with nudity, or places where the wrong kind of partner is likely to be found. Instead, substitute healthy entertainment and church social activities.

Negative emotions (e.g., anger and frustration), social pressures, boredom, exhaustion, high-risk friends, and newfound freedom are all triggers that make you vulnerable. Many ex-prisoners want to celebrate after release, and they should, but many rush right back to “feeling good” after a long dry spell without drugs and alcohol. Watch for thinking errors like believing you can make it on your own or resist your triggers without help. You’ll need a sponsor, mentor, or mature friend to hold you accountable, to help you recognize your triggers and avoid them.

Track your triggers by honestly reflecting on your past behaviors and the cravings that come with them. Which events, circumstances, or mental conditions have led to your addictive actions? What inaccurate thoughts do you believe? Are you ready to change? Nobody is willing to change until the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of changing, even though the initial pain of change may seem worse.

### Ways to resist

SOME TRIGGERS CAN’T BE TOTALLY AVOIDED, such as mental images, common sights, or other circumstances beyond your control. You must develop a strategy to counter everyday events that lead you astray. When I quit drugs I no longer drove alone to certain parts of town. I stopped reading *High Times* magazine. When I drifted into dreaming of pleasant mental images of getting high, I countered those thoughts by admitting to myself that drugs almost ruined me. I ruthlessly examined my drug life and its almost total destruction of everything that I really cared about. Avert your eyes, change your steps, and control your thought life.

As mentioned above, conquering the triggers that can set you up for a return trip to the pen isn’t a Lone Ranger effort. Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps sounds tough and in keeping with the great American tradition of rugged individualism. But it just isn’t so.



My life is an example. For many years, I did drugs every day. But I have been totally free now for 25 consecutive years. During the first years, temptations and triggers loomed everywhere, but with time, healing, and the patience of my mentor, these things gradually faded away. How did I do it? It was a daily effort with a lot of hard work. I heeded my own advice, but ultimately it came down to a Power Source outside myself. Faith in Jesus, His forgiveness of my sins and His promise to keep me from falling were the keys to sticking to the plan and avoiding my triggers. Through daily prayer and studying the Bible, I tapped into His strength, not my own.

Jesus laid His life down for you, too. Real power to change comes from God as He transforms our desires and personality. Your battles will be rewarded as the old desires gradually die out and triggers lose their influence. Join me and adopt my saying about triggers: “This is no longer an option for me.” ■

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*The Reverend John Leonardson is the Founder of MentorCare Ministries.*

## XIV. Are You a Veteran?

**A** 2004 Justice Department survey found that nearly 140,000 prisoners in America served in the United States military . . . and some veterans groups believe that number may be higher. More than 90 percent of those incarcerated veterans hold an honorable discharge.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has created a range of programs aimed at helping released vets find housing, a job and other resources to make a successful transition into the community. But you must have the honorable discharge to qualify; if you don't, you should begin the process of trying to upgrade your discharge to honorable status via a Department of Defense Form 293 so that you can participate fully in the benefits.

The VA programs for honorably discharged vets vary widely across the country, depending on the resources and staff available at any given Veterans Center, which is the local outreach of the VA. Call or have someone call for you **1-800-827-1000** to find out where the nearest Vet Center is to your city of release.

We don't get many big, special days in life. What's worse than having a day when you come home from prison? Having two homecomings, or three, or however many times you choose to recycle yourself through the criminal justice system. So try to get it right the first time. Nobody really wants you to fail, it just seems that way. Your future, if you have one, is in your own hands; even a P.O. will tell you that. ■



## XV. Parting Advice

**W**ell, it is a lot of information to digest, but we hope that this booklet has provided you with some good ideas and places to start as you begin your new journey back to freedomville. We have just a few more tips before we finish.

First, and above all, you will need to trust in God to carry you through the many lonely, frustrating, scary challenges that you will face. We wrote about this more fully in the “Soul Success” chapter, but it’s worth repeating above every other piece of advice. The certainty of your struggle is not cause to live in fear. It *is*, however, a very good reason to live daily on your knees, asking God to open the doors, meet the needs, and deliver you from evil. As it says in the Bible, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33, NIV). And most often God answers those prayers using His people in churches. Do not shrug this off as merely optional.

Next, be warned, there are a lot of pre-release scams waiting for you—don’t buy into them. Usually the victim is told that for a modest fee (\$25-50), they will send you a full package of materials guaranteed to get you big government loans and other goodies. After money is paid, often nothing is delivered, or if it is, the documents are full of errors. Be suspicious.

This may not seem like a big deal right now, but get and stay healthy. Prison is not a place brimming with good health. You are in an environment rich with opportunities for the spread of tuberculosis, hepatitis, and AIDS. The health care and medication that you received while locked up was most likely less stellar than the Mayo Clinic.

But once you are out and have a job with health benefits, you should take advantage of it immediately with full doctor, dentist, and eye examinations. The longer you have been down, the more things might be wrong with your body that you don’t know about. Early examination can lead to early diagnosis and successful treatment of diseases that were feared and sometimes fatal back in the days when you first went in.

Learn to recognize and eat nourishing food—a Coke and burrito diet definitely won’t keep you going very long. And try to find the time and the means to get regular exercise. You may have pumped iron or walked long distances around the prison yard while locked up; if so, you need to retain the tone and cardiovascular health you built up. Walk around your neighborhood before or after work. Jog, if you can. Get a couple of barbells and do light lifting. It all helps fight off



depression and costly medical expenses that will be tough to pay with or without medical benefits. Whatever your age, prepare your body as if you will live for another 50 years. Maybe you will.

It really is our sincere hope that you will make it—and that this booklet will help to increase the number of prison survivors by at least another 20 percent! Now get going, and be sure to write us a letter about your success when you get a chance. ■

# APPENDICES

State Repositories of Criminal Records • State Departments of Labor • State Attorneys General  
• Other Government and Nonprofit Agencies • Essential Services • Recommended Further Reading

Checking the listed websites is the best way to verify that the information provided in the appendices is up to date. This information is constantly changing. If you do not have easy access to the Internet upon your release, your public library is a great way to get connected. (It may require a library card membership, but there should not be no charge for this.)

## APPENDIX A

### State Repositories of Criminal Records

#### Alabama

Bureau of Investigation,  
Attn: Identification Unit  
PO Box 1511  
Montgomery, AL 36102-1511  
(334) 353-4340  
[www.dps.state.al.us](http://www.dps.state.al.us)

#### Alaska

Department of  
Public Safety  
Criminal Records  
& Identification  
Bureau  
5700 E Tudor Road  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
(907) 269-5640  
[www.dps.state.ak.us](http://www.dps.state.ak.us)

#### Arizona

Criminal History  
Records  
PO Box 18450  
Phoenix, AZ 85005  
(602) 223-2222  
[www.azdps.gov](http://www.azdps.gov)

#### Arkansas

State Police,  
Identification Bureau  
1 State Police Plaza Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72209  
(501) 618-8500  
[www.portal.arkansas.gov](http://www.portal.arkansas.gov)

#### California

Department of Justice  
Bureau of Criminal  
Identification  
& Information  
Attn: Record Review Unit  
Sacramento, CA 94203-4170  
(916) 227-3835  
[www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)

#### Colorado

Bureau of Investigation  
690 Kipling Street  
Denver, CO 80215  
(303) 239-4300  
[www.cbirecordscheck.com](http://www.cbirecordscheck.com)

#### Connecticut

State Police  
Bureau of Identification  
1111 Country Club Road  
Middletown, CT 06457  
(860) 685-8480  
[www.ct.gov/dps](http://www.ct.gov/dps)

#### Delaware

State Police,  
Criminal History Section  
PO Box 430  
Dover, DE 19903  
[www.delaware.gov](http://www.delaware.gov)

#### Florida

Florida Department  
of Law Enforcement  
PO Box 1489  
Tallahassee, FL 32302  
(850) 410-8109  
[www2.fidle.state.fl.us](http://www2.fidle.state.fl.us)

#### Georgia

Georgia Crime  
Information Center (GCIC)  
Georgia Bureau of  
Investigation's website  
[www.gbi.georgia.gov](http://www.gbi.georgia.gov)  
404-244-2639

#### Hawaii

Criminal Justice Data Center  
465 S King Street, Room 101  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 587-3100  
[www.ecrim.ehawaii.gov](http://www.ecrim.ehawaii.gov)

#### Idaho

State Police,  
Criminal History Unit  
700 South Stratford Drive  
Meridian, Idaho 83680-0700  
(208) 884-7130  
[www.isp.state.id.us](http://www.isp.state.id.us)

#### Illinois

State Police,  
Bureau of Identification  
260 N Chicago Street  
Joliet, IL 60431-1060  
(815) 740-5216  
[www.isp.state.il.us](http://www.isp.state.il.us)

#### Indiana

State Police,  
Criminal History  
Limited Check  
PO Box 6188  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6188  
(317) 232-8263  
[www.in.gov](http://www.in.gov)

**Iowa**

Division of Criminal Investigation  
Wallace State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
(515) 725-6010  
www.dps.state.ia.us

**Kansas**

Central Repository  
Attn: KBI Criminal History Records Section  
1620 SW Tyler  
Topeka, Kansas  
66612-1837  
(785) 296-8200  
www.kansas.gov

**Kentucky**

State Police,  
Criminal ID  
& Records Branch  
Criminal Records  
Dissemination Section  
1250 Louisville Road,  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
(502) 227-8713  
www.kentuckystatepolice.org

**Louisiana**

Bureau of Criminal Identification & Information  
PO Box 66614,  
#A-6,  
Baton Rouge, LA  
70896-6614  
(225) 925-6095  
www.lsp.org

**Maine**

State Bureau of Identification  
State House Station #42  
Augusta, ME  
04333-0042  
(207) 624-7240  
www.maine.gov

**Maryland**

CJIS – Central Repository  
PO Box 32708,  
Pikesville, MD  
21282-2708  
(888) 795-0011  
www.dpscs.state.md.us

**Massachusetts**

Criminal Records Unit,  
Criminal History  
Systems Board  
200 Arlington Street,  
Suite 2200  
Chelsea, MA 02150  
(617) 660-4600  
www.mass.gov

**Michigan**

Michigan Department of State Police  
Criminal Justice Information Center  
Freedom of Information Unit  
7150 Harris Drive  
Lansing, MI 48913  
(517) 322-5509  
http://www.michigan.gov

**Minnesota**

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension  
Criminal Justice Information Systems - CHA  
1430 Maryland Avenue East  
St. Paul, MN 55106  
651-793-2400  
www.dps.state.mn.us

**Mississippi**

Criminal Information Center  
PO Box 958  
Jackson, MS 39205  
(601) 933-2600  
www.dps.state.ms.us

**Missouri**

Missouri State Highway Patrol  
Criminal Records & Identification Division  
PO Box 9500  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 751-3313  
www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov

**Montana**

Montana Criminal Records  
303 N Roberts

PO Box 201403  
Helena, MT 59620-1403  
(406) 444-3625  
www.doj.state.mt.us

**Nevada**

Department of Public Safety,  
Records & Identification  
333 W Nye Lane, Suite 100  
Carson City, NV 89703  
(775) 684-6262  
www.nvrepository.state.nv.us

**Nebraska**

Nebraska State Patrol,  
Attn: CID  
P.O. Box 94907  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
(402) 471-4545  
www.nsp.state.ne.us

**New Hampshire**

New Hampshire Dept. of Safety  
Division of State Police  
Central Repository for Criminal Records  
33 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03305  
(603) 271-2538  
www.nh.gov

**New Jersey**

Division of State Police  
PO Box 7068  
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0068  
www.state.nj.us

**New Mexico**

Department of Public Safety,  
Attn: Records  
PO Box 1628  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1628  
(505) 827-9181  
www.dps.nm.org

**New York**

Record Review Unit,  
New York State  
Division of Criminal Justice Services  
4 Tower Place  
Albany, New York 12203-3764  
(518) 485-7675  
www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us

**North Carolina**

North Carolina does NOT have a “State Police.” Individuals should contact the County Sheriff’s Office (in the county in which they reside).

**North Dakota**

North Dakota Office of Attorney General  
Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
PO Box 1054  
Bismarck, ND 58502-1054  
(701) 328-5500  
www.ag.state.nd.us

**Ohio**

Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation  
P.O. Box 365  
London, OH 43140  
(740) 845-2000  
www.ag.state.oh.us

**Oklahoma**

State Bureau of Investigation  
Criminal History Reporting Unit  
6600 North Harvey  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116  
(405) 848-6724  
www.osbi.state.ok.us

**Oregon**

Oregon State Police  
Identification Services Section,  
Unit 11  
3772 Portland Road, N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301  
(503) 378-3070 ext. 230  
www.oregon.gov

**Pennsylvania**

State Police  
Central Repository  
1800 Elmerton Ave  
Harrisburg, PA  
17110-9758  
(717) 783-5593  
www.psp.state.pa.us

**Rhode Island**

Bureau of Criminal Identification/  
Investigation  
150 S Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 274-4400  
www.riag.ri.gov

**South Carolina**

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division  
PO Box 21398  
Columbia, SC 29210  
(803) 737-9000  
www.sled.state.sc.us

**South Dakota**

Office of the Attorney General  
Division of Criminal Investigations  
500 E Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3331  
http://dci.sd.gov

**Tennessee**

Bureau of Investigation  
901 R S Gass Blvd.  
Nashville, TN  
37216  
(615) 744-4000  
www.tbi.state.tn.us

**Texas**

Texas Department of Public Safety  
Crime Records Service  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, TX  
78773  
(512) 424-2000  
www.txdps.state.tx.us

**Utah**

Bureau of Criminal Identification  
3888 West 5400 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84118  
(801) 965-4445  
www.bci.utah.gov

**Vermont**

Visit Vermont’s website for information about how to obtain records.  
www.dps.state.vt.us

**Virginia**

Department of State Police  
PO Box 85076  
Richmond, VA 23261-5076  
(804) 674-2024  
www.vsp.state.va.us

**Washington**

Identification and Criminal History Section  
Washington State Patrol  
PO Box 42633  
Olympia, WA 98504-2633  
(360) 705-5100  
www.watch.wsp.wa.gov

**Washington, DC**

Metropolitan Police Department  
Arrest and Criminal History Section  
ATTN: Police Clearances  
300 Indiana Avenue NW,  
Room 3055  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-1000  
www.mpdc.dc.gov

**West Virginia**

West Virginia State Police—CIB,  
Records Section  
725 Jefferson Road  
South Charleston, WV  
25309-1698  
(304) 746-2170  
www.wvstatepolice.com

**Wisconsin**

Department of Justice,  
Crime Information Bureau  
PO Box 2688  
Madison, WI 53701-2688  
(608) 266-5764  
www.doj.state.wi.us

**Wyoming**  
Division of  
Criminal Investigation  
316 W 22nd Street  
Cheyenne, WY  
82002  
(307) 777-7181  
www.attorneygeneral.state.  
wy.us/dci/chc.html

## APPENDIX B

### State Departments of Labor

**Alabama**  
Alabama Dept. of Labor  
100 North Union St., Suite 260  
P.O. Box 303500  
Montgomery, AL 36130-3500  
Phone: 334-242-3460  
Fax: 334-240-3417

**Alaska**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
P.O. Box 21149  
Juneau, AK 99802-1149  
Phone: 907-465-2700  
Fax: 907-465-2784

**Arizona**  
Chairman  
Industrial Commission  
800 W. Washington St., Suite 403  
P.O. Box 19070  
Phoenix, AZ 85005-9070  
Phone: 602-542-4661  
Fax: 602-542-7889

**Arkansas**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor  
10421 West Markham St.  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
Phone: 501-682-4541  
Fax: 501-682-4535

**California**  
Director  
Dept. of Industrial Relations  
455 Golden Gate Ave.,  
10th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone: 415-703-5050  
Fax: 415-703-5058

**Colorado**  
Executive Director  
Department of Labor and  
Employment  
1515 Arapahoe Street  
Tower 11, Suite 400  
Denver, CO 80202-2117  
Phone: 303-620-4701  
Fax: 303-318-8048

**Connecticut**  
Commissioner  
Labor Dept.  
200 Folly Brook Boulevard  
Wethersfield, CT 06109-1114  
Phone: 860-263-6505  
Fax: 860-263-6529

**Delaware**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Labor  
4425 N. Market Street, 4th Floor  
Wilmington, DE 19802  
Phone: 302-761-8000  
Fax: 302-761-6621

**District of Columbia**  
64 New York Avenue, N.E.  
Suite 3000  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-724-7000

**Florida**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Labor and Employment  
Security  
2012 Capitol Circle, S.E.  
Hartman Building, Suite 303  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2152  
Phone: 850-922-7021  
Fax: 850-488-8930

**Georgia**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
Sussex Place - Room 600  
148 International Blvd., N.E.  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: 404-656-3011  
Fax: 404-656-2683

**Guam**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor  
Government of Guam  
P.O. Box 9970  
Tamuning, GU 96931-9970  
Phone: 671-475-0101  
Fax: 671-477-2988

**Hawaii**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor  
and Industrial Relations  
830 Punchbowl Street  
Room 321  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: 808-586-8844  
Fax: 808-586-9099

**Idaho**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor  
317 W. Main Street  
Boise, ID 83735-0001  
Phone: 208-334-6110  
Fax: 208-334-6430

**Illinois**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor  
160 N. LaSalle Street  
13th Floor  
Suite C-1300  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Phone: 312-793-1808  
Fax: 312-793-5257

**Indiana**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
402 West Washington Street  
Room W195  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739  
Phone: 317-232-2378  
Fax: 317-233-5381

**Iowa**  
Director  
Iowa Workforce  
Development  
1000 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0209  
Phone: 515-281-3447  
Fax: 515-281-4698

**Kansas**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Human Resources  
401 S.W. Topeka Boulevard  
Topeka, KS 66603  
Phone: 785-296-7474  
Fax: 785-368-6294

**Kentucky**  
Secretary  
Labor Cabinet  
1047 U.S. Hwy. 127 So., Suite 4  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
Phone: 502-564-3070  
Fax: 502-564-5387

**Louisiana**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Labor  
P.O. Box 94094  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094  
Phone: 225-342-3011  
Fax: 225-342-3778

**Maine**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
20 Union Street  
P.O. Box 259  
Augusta, ME 04332-0259  
Phone: 207-287-3788  
Fax: 207-287-5292

**Maryland**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Labor, Licensing  
& Regulation  
500 N. Calvert Street, Suite 401  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone: 410-230-6020 ext. 1393  
Fax: 410-333-0853

**Massachusetts**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor & Work Force  
Development  
1 Ashburton Place, Room 2112  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: 617-727-6573  
Fax: 617-727-1090

**Michigan**  
Director  
Dept. of Consumer

& Industry Services  
P.O. Box 30004  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Phone: 517-373-3034  
Fax: 517-373-2129

**Minnesota**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor and Industry  
443 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: 651-296-2342  
Fax: 651-282-5405

**Mississippi**  
Chairman  
Workers' Compensation  
Commission  
1428 Lakeland Drive  
P.O. Box 5300  
Jackson, MS 39296  
Phone: 601-987-4258  
Fax: 601-987-4233

**Missouri**  
Director  
Dept. of Labor & Industrial  
Relations  
P.O. Box 504  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
Phone: 573-751-9691  
Fax: 573-751-4135

**Montana**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor and Industry  
P.O. Box 1728  
Helena, MT 59624-1728  
Phone: 406-444-9091  
Fax: 406-444-1394

**Nebraska**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
& Workforce Development  
550 South 16th Street  
Box 94600  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4600  
Phone: 402-471-9792  
Fax: 402-471-2318

**Nevada**  
Commissioner  
Labor Commission

555 E. Washington Avenue  
Suite 4100  
Las Vegas, NV 89101  
Phone: 702-486-2650  
Fax: 702-486-2660

**New Hampshire**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
95 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
Phone: 603-271-3171  
Fax: 603-271-6852

**New Jersey**  
Commissioner  
New Jersey Dept. of Labor  
John Fitch Plaza  
13th Floor, Suite D  
P.O. Box CN 110  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0110  
Phone: 609-984-4248  
Fax: 609-633-9271

**New Mexico**  
Secretary  
Dept. of Labor  
P.O. Box 1928  
401 Broadway, N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87103-1928  
Phone: 505-841-8408  
Fax: 505-841-8491

**New York**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
State Campus, Building 12  
Albany, NY 12240  
Phone: 518-457-2741  
Fax: 518-457-6908

**North Carolina**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
& Workforce Development  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1092  
Phone: 919-733-7166  
Fax: 919-733-0223

**North Dakota**  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
State Capitol Building  
600 East Boulevard, Dept. 406

Bismark, ND 58505-0340  
Phone: 701-328-2660  
Fax: 701-328-2031

#### Ohio

Administrator  
Bureau of Employment Services  
145 South Front Street  
Columbus, OH 43218-2132  
Phone: 614-466-8073  
Fax: 614-466-5025

#### Oklahoma

Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
4001 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-5212  
Phone: 405-528-1500, ext. 200  
Fax: 405-528-5751

#### Oregon

Commissioner  
Bureau of Labor and Industries  
800 NE Oregon Street, #32  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: 503-731-4070  
Fax: 503-731-4103

#### Pennsylvania

Secretary  
Dept. of Labor and Industry  
1700 Labor and Industry Bldg.  
7th and Forster Streets  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Phone: 717-787-3756  
Fax: 717-787-8826

#### Puerto Rico

Secretary  
Dept. of Labor & Human Res.  
Edificio Prudencio Rivera  
Martinez  
505 Munoz Rivera Avenue  
Hato Rey, PR 00918  
Phone: 787-754-2110 or 2120  
Fax: 787-756-1150

#### Rhode Island

Director  
Dept. of Labor  
610 Manton Avenue  
Providence, RI 02909  
Phone: 401-457-1701  
Fax: 401-457-1769

#### South Carolina

Director  
Dept. of Labor, Licensing  
& Regulations  
Synergy Building  
110 Center View Drive  
P.O. Box 11329  
Columbia, SC 29211-1329  
Phone: 803-896-4390  
Fax: 803-896-4387

#### South Dakota

Secretary  
Dept. of Labor  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291  
Phone: 605-773-3101  
Fax: 605-773-4211

#### Tennessee

Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor  
Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Pkwy.  
8th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243-0655  
Phone: 615-741-2582  
Fax: 615-741-5078

#### Texas

Executive Director  
Texas Workforce Commission  
101 East 15th Street, Rm. 618  
Austin, TX 78778  
Phone: 512-463-0735  
Fax: 512-475-2321

#### Utah

Commissioner  
Utah Labor Commission  
General Administration Building  
P.O. Box 146600  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6600  
Phone: 801-530-6880  
Fax: 801-530-6390

#### Vermont

Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor & Industry  
National Life Building  
Drawer #20  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3401  
Phone: 802-828-5098  
Fax: 802-828-2195

#### Virgin Islands

Commissioner of Labor  
Dept. of Labor  
2303 Church St., Christiansted  
St. Croix, U.S. VI 00820-4612  
Phone: 340-773-1994, ext. 230  
Fax: 340-773-0094

#### Virginia

Commissioner  
Dept. of Labor and Industry  
Powers-Taylor Building  
13 S. 13th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone: 804-786-2377  
Fax: 804-371-6524

#### Washington

Director  
Dept. of Labor & Industries  
7273 Linderson Way  
P.O. Box 44001  
Olympia, WA 98504-4001  
Phone: 360-902-4213  
Fax: 360-902-4202

#### West Virginia

Commissioner  
Division of Labor  
Bureau of Commerce  
State Capitol Complex  
Building #6, Room 749B  
Charleston, WV 25305  
Phone: 304-558-7890  
Fax: 304-558-2273

#### Wisconsin

Secretary  
Dept. of Workforce Dev.  
201 East Washington Ave.,  
#400  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Phone: 608-267-9692  
Fax: 608-266-1784

#### Wyoming

Director  
Dept. of Employment  
Herschler Building, 2 East  
122 W. 25th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: 307-777-7672  
Fax: 307-777-5805

## APPENDIX C

### State Attorneys General

#### Alabama

Troy King  
State House  
500 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36130  
(334) 242-7300

#### Alaska

Daniel S. Sullivan  
Diamond Courthouse  
P.O. Box 110300  
Juneau, AK 99811-0300  
(907) 465-2133

#### Arizona

Terry Goddard  
1275 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 542-5025

#### Arkansas

Dustin McDaniel  
200 Tower Bldg.  
323 Center Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201-2610  
(501) 682-2007

#### California

Edmund G. Jerry Brown, Jr.  
1300 I Street, Suite 1740  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 324-5437

#### Colorado

John Sithers  
Dept. of Law  
1525 Sherman Street, 5th Floor  
Denver, CO 80203  
(303) 866-4500

#### Connecticut

Richard Blumenthal  
55 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06141-0120  
(860) 808-5324

#### Delaware

Joseph R. "Beau" Biden II  
Carvel State Office Bldg.

820 N. French St.  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 577-8400

#### District of Columbia

Peter Nickels  
D.C. Corporation Counsel  
Office of the Corporation Counsel  
441 4th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-6248

#### Florida

Bill McCollum  
The Capitol, PL 01  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050  
(850) 487-1963

#### Georgia

Thurbert E. Baker  
40 Capitol Square, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30334-1300  
(404) 656-4585

#### Guam

Alicia G. Limtiaco  
E. Judicial Center Bldg., Ste. 2-200  
120 West O'Brien Drive  
Hagatna, Guam 96910  
(671) 475-3324

#### Hawaii

Mark J. Bennett  
425 Queen Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 586-1500

#### Idaho

Laurence Wasden  
Statehouse  
P. O. Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0010  
(208) 334-2400

#### Illinois

Lisa Wasden  
James R. Thompson Ctr.  
100 W. Randolph Street  
Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 814-2503

#### Indiana

Greg Zoeller  
Indiana Government Center S.

402 W. Washington St., 5th Floor  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
(317) 233-4386

#### Iowa

Tom Miller  
Hoover State Office Bldg.  
1305 E. Walnut St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
(515) 281-3053

#### Kansas

Steve Six  
120 S.W. 10th Avenue, 2nd Floor  
Topeka, KS 66612-1597  
(785) 296-2215

#### Kentucky

Jack Conway  
State Capitol, Suite 118  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
(502) 696-5300

#### Louisiana

James D. "Buddy" Caldwell  
Dept. of Justice  
P.O. Box 94095  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4095  
(225) 342-7013

#### Maine

Janet T. Mills  
6 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0006  
(207) 626-8800

#### Maryland

Douglas F. Gansler  
200 St. Paul Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202-2202  
(410) 576-6300

#### Massachusetts

Martha Cookley  
1 Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108-1698  
(617) 727-2200

#### Michigan

Mike Cox  
P.O. Box 30212  
525 W. Ottawa Street  
Lansing, MI 48909-0212  
(517) 373-1110

**Minnesota**

Lori Swanson  
1400 Bremer Tower  
445 Minnesota Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101

**Mississippi**

Jim Hood  
Dept. of Justice, P.O. Box 220  
Jackson, MS 39205-0220  
(601) 359-3692

**Missouri**

Chris Koster  
Supreme Court Building  
207 W. High Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65101  
(573) 751-3321

**Montana**

Steve Bullock  
Justice Building  
P.O. Box 201401  
Helena, MT 59620-1401  
(406) 444-2026

**Nebraska**

John Bruning  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 98920  
Lincoln, NE 68509-8920  
(402) 471-2682

**Nevada**

Catherine Cortez Masto  
Old Supreme Court Bldg.  
100 N. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701  
(775) 684-1100

**New Hampshire**

Orville B. Fitch II  
State House Annex  
33 Capitol Street  
Concord, NH 03301-6397  
(603) 271-3658

**New Jersey**

Anne Milgram  
Office of the Attorney General  
Dept. of Law and Public Safety  
P.O. Box 080  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
(609) 292-4925

**New Mexico**

Gary King  
P.O. Drawer 1508  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1508  
(505) 827-6000

**New York**

Andrew Cuomo  
Dept. of Law  
The Capitol, Room 220  
Albany, NY 12224  
(518) 474-7330

**North Carolina**

Roy Cooper  
Dept. of Justice  
P.O. Box 629  
Raleigh, NC 27602-0629  
(919) 716-6400

**North Dakota**

Wayne Stenehjem  
State Capitol  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0040  
(701) 328-2210

**Ohio**

Richard Cordray  
State Office Tower  
30 E. Broad Street, 17th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
(614) 466-4320

**Oklahoma**

W.A. Drew Edmondson  
State Capitol, Room 112  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
(405) 521-3921

**Oregon**

John Kroger  
Justice Building  
1162 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97310  
(503) 378-6002

**Pennsylvania**

Tom Corbett  
Strawberry Square,  
16th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 787-3391

**Puerto Rico**

Antonio Sagardia  
P.O. Box 9020192  
San Juan, PR 00902-0192  
(787) 721-7700

**Rhode Island**

Patrick C. Lynch  
150 South Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 274-4400

**South Carolina**

Henry McMaster  
Rembert C. Dennis Office Bldg.  
P.O. Box 11549  
Columbia, SC 29211-1549  
(803) 734-3970

**South Dakota**

Larry Long  
1302 East Hwy 14, Suite 1  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070  
(605) 773-3215

**Tennessee**

Robert E. Cooper, Jr.  
500 Charlotte Avenue  
Nashville, TN 37243  
(615) 741-5860

**Texas**

Greg Abbott  
Capitol Station  
P.O. Box 12548  
Austin, TX 78711-2548  
(512) 463-2191

**Utah**

Mark Shurtless  
236 State Capitol  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-0810  
(801) 538-1326

**Vermont**

William H. Sorrell  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001  
(802) 828-3171

**Virginia**

Bill Mims  
900 E. Main St.  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 786-2071

**Washington**

Rob McKenna  
P.O. Box 40100  
1125 Washington St, SE  
Olympia, WA 98504-0100  
(360) 753-6200

**West Virginia**

Darrell V. McGraw, Jr.  
State Capitol  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.  
Charleston, WV 25305  
(304) 558-2021

**Wisconsin**

J.B. Van Hollen  
State Capitol, Suite 114 E.  
P.O. Box 7857  
Madison, WI 53707-7857  
(608) 266-1221

**Wyoming**

Bruce A. Salzburg  
State Capitol Bldg, Room 123  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
(307) 777-7841

**APPENDIX D****Other Government Agencies & Nonprofit Organizations****U.S. Dept. of Labor**

1 (866) 4-USA-DOL  
www.dol.gov

**Employment & Training Admin.**

(202) 693-2790  
www.doleta.gov

**Welfare-to-Work Division**

(202) 693-3910  
www.doleta.gov

**Regional Work Opportunity Tax Credit Coordinators**

(202) 693-3949 (D.C.)

**Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credits**

(202) 693-2786  
www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/employ/wotc.asp

**Federal Bonding Program**

(800) 233-2258  
www.usworkforce.org/onestop/FBP.html

**Workforce Investment Act**

(202) 693-3045  
www.dol.gov

**America's Workforce Network Toll-Free Helpline**

(877) US-2JOBS

**America's Service Locator**

www.servicelocator.org

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

(877) 696-6775  
www.hhs.gov

**Administration for Children and Families (ACF)**

(202) 401-9200  
www.acf.dhhs.gov

**Office of Child Support Enforcement (CSE)**

(202) 401-9373  
www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse

**Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)**

(240) 276-1660  
www.samhsa.gov/csac/csac.htm

**U.S. Dept. of Transportation**

(202) 366-4000  
www.dot.gov

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

(800) 669-4000  
www.eeoc.gov

**Federal Bureau of Prisons**

(202) 305-3860  
www.unicor.gov/placeinment/ipprogram.html

**Legal Action Center**

(212) 243-1313  
www.lac.org

**APPENDIX E****Essential Services**

**NEWLY RELEASED PRISONERS will need life-support services at their destination city. The following list will help get you started. Most of the contact information is for national offices. However, the referenced websites provide links to local organizations. If you are unfamiliar with the social-service agencies in the community, contact a church or family-services organization with a ministry to the poor. They usually know who the key resources are for those in need.**

**Catholic Charities USA:** Local Catholic Charities agencies work in many ways to help families and individuals find and keep decent housing. Local community problems are addressed through more than 4,000 parishes across the country. Many local agencies help people affected by HIV/AIDS. National Office: 703-549-1390 [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org)

**Goodwill Industries:** Goodwill Industries provides people with the tools they need to succeed at working. This is one of the world's largest nonprofit providers of employment and training services for people who have a history of welfare dependency, illiteracy, criminal history, and homelessness. To find a local Goodwill, call: 800-664-6577 E-mail: [contactus@goodwill.org](mailto:contactus@goodwill.org) [www.goodwill.org](http://www.goodwill.org)

**Salvation Army:** Cooperative arrangements exist between the Salvation Army and prison, probation, and parole officers in a program of prison rehabilitation and crime prevention. Services

include pre-release job-training, employment opportunities, material aid, and spiritual guidance. Salvation Army rehabilitation centers and Harbor Light centers have been designated as halfway houses for former prisoners in work-release programs. National phone: 703-684-5500 E-mail: SA\_Information@USN. salvationarmy.org [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

**Social Security Administration (SSA):** An ex-prisoner will need a Social Security card/number to work. He or she may not have this information on hand. You may have an SSA office in your community. Some ex-prisoners may be eligible for retirement or disability depending on their age and health. This information may also be obtained from the SSA. For more information, check the blue government pages in your phone book for a local office. Or download the directions to the closest office from their website. National phone: 800-772-1213 [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA):** The ETA offers Adult Training programs to teach job skills and provide job placement services for economically disadvantaged adults. Their Welfare to Work program offers training and jobs to help people get off welfare and maintain solid work habits. There are programs to help low-income women with criminal records achieve self-sufficiency. Apprenticeships, a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction, help workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of highly skilled occupations. Check the local ETA office in your state. [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov)

**United Way:** United Way's foundation is built on the effectiveness of local organizations working together to assist people in need. Through an extensive network of volunteers and community-service agencies, United Way organizations help to meet the health and human care needs of millions of people every day. National phone: 703-836-7100 [www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)

**YMCA:** The Y's community-developed efforts include alternative schools, gang intervention, family literacy programs, tutoring, substance abuse prevention, job training, employment services, and permanent and transitional housing. Phone: 888-333-YMCA [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)

**YWCA:** The YWCA's community programs include services for women in recovery, housing, child care, health and fitness. Phone: 212-273-7800 [www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org)

## APPENDIX F

### Recommended Further Reading

***The Ex-inmate's Complete Guide to Successful Employment.*** The book costs \$29.95 plus shipping. You may order from: The Correctional Education Company and Aardvark Resumes & Career Counseling, 433 Franklin St., Patio Suite, Buffalo, NY 14202.

***9 to 5 Beats Ten to Life: How to Re-enter Society*** (\$15) Written by Mike Davis for adult offenders, this workbook provides practical information on employment, careers, and community resources, how to prepare for a job while incarcerated, where to

get career counseling, assessing your interests, talents, and personality, and continuing your education or job training.

***As Free as an Eagle: The Inmate's Family Survival Guide*** (\$20)

Written by Daniel J. Boyce, Certified Family Life educator, this easy-to-understand, 235-page book examines the issues and problems faced by inmates and their families during incarceration and after release. This self-help guide teaches the offender how to establish productive relationships, develop problem-solving skills, and re-enter society upon release.

**The following books are available through Crown Financial Ministries, P.O. Box 100, Gainesville, GA 30503.**

***The Guide to Family Budgeting***  
A 30-page brochure that CFC offers free of charge.

***Family Financial Workbook*** (\$15 plus shipping)  
This book contains easy-to-follow worksheets and step-by-step instructions to help you structure and maintain your budget.

***How to Manage Your Money, Workbook*** (\$16 plus shipping)  
This text teaches how to set up a budget, manage finances, balance a checkbook, write a résumé, and more. It is designed for 16- to 21-year-olds.

***Using Your Money Wisely*** (\$13 plus shipping)  
This helpful book by the late Larry Burkett explores biblical principles related to money management. Among the many crucial subjects discussed are gambling, credit cards, tithing, and bankruptcy.



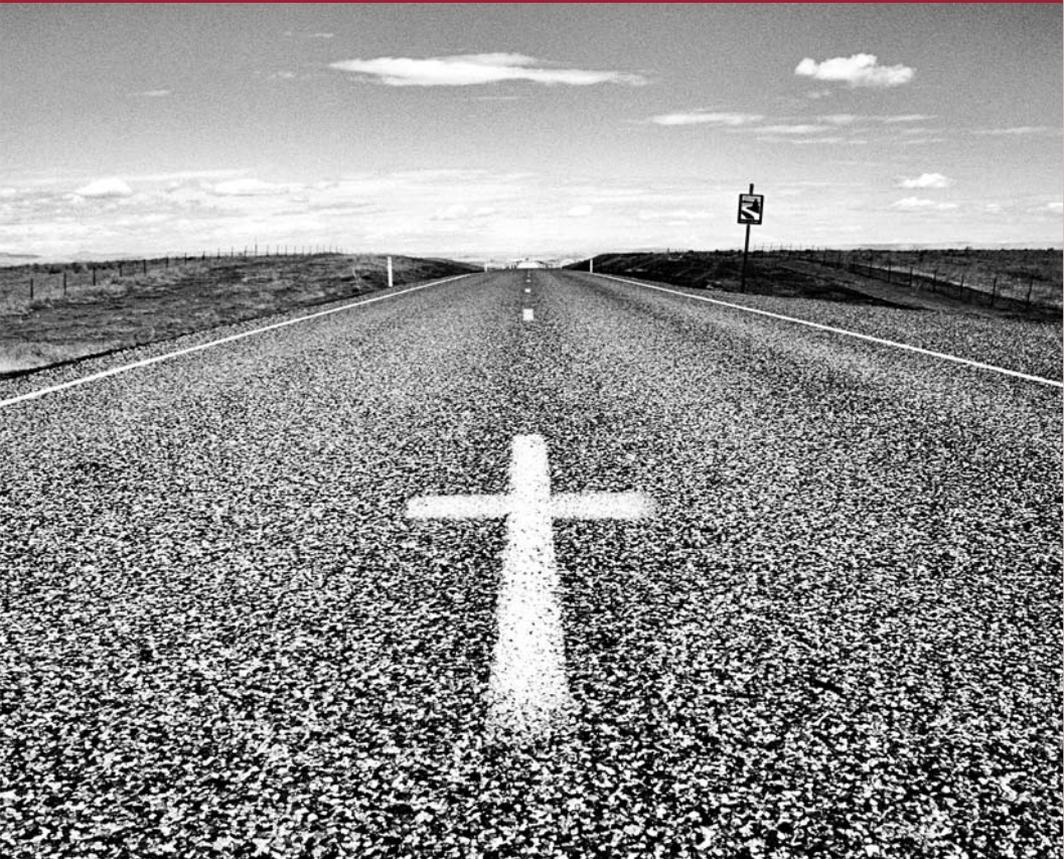
**So do not fear, for I am with you;**

**do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

**I will strengthen you and help you; I will**

**uphold you with my righteous right hand.**

**—Isaiah: 41:10**



44180 Riverside Parkway • Lansdowne, VA • 20176 • [www.prisonfellowship.org](http://www.prisonfellowship.org)

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