

From the King's Table

So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table.
2 Kings 25:29



From the Director

DR. BRUCE PERKINS

Students were gathering for class as I entered the classroom one day early this spring semester. I overheard a conversation between some of them as they were discussing the meaning of various passages in Homer's *Iliad*, a required text for their English course. Beyond the text itself, these students were making observations based upon what they have learned about the doctrine of revelation and various themes in the Old Testament. My first thought was, "Wow! I would never have expected to hear a discussion of classical Greek literature in prison!" My second thought was, "Thank you, Lord. What a wonderful confirmation that these students are getting it!" It is a blessing to witness minds coming alive. It is a blessing to hear students integrating their faith with scholarship. It is a blessing to see thoughts and actions being influenced by Scripture.

Pray that this educational journey will continue to be marked by an eagerness to learn and an intentional stewardship of loving God with one's mind. As I write this column, our students have been locked down for two weeks. This results in no class, no engaging academic or spiritual conversations among students (and other inmates), mental fatigue, and emotional stress. The adversary seeks to use circumstances (in all of our lives) to bring frustration and discouragement. However, our God is sovereign! Circumstances bow before His throne! These students will not succumb to the subtle trickery of the enemy! They will persevere in the purpose God has chosen for them! Thank you for your continued intercession. Your prayers are the weapons of their warfare. Do not grow weary.

The Prison Divinity Program transforms the lives of incarcerated individuals to redeem both the self and the system through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ by providing a learning environment and program of study that leads to a reformed perspective on life which results in a redirected purpose for life.



Penned from Prison

This section of our newsletter features comments written by our students shared with their permission from their journals and writing assignments.

Thank You, God, for waking me up this morning! Give me strength, guidance, understanding, health and wellness. Watch over my children and grandchildren. Continue to bless our OBU family. - George C.

I had a major breakthrough in one of my addictions today. I have been addicted to video games my whole life and waste hours everyday playing them instead of reading, studying, or doing something useful. Today, God convicted me to quit wasting time on games. I deleted 15-20 games on my tablet. God strengthened me. Praise God! - Edsel H.

I've seen relationships restored since I've been in this program. That happened because people put their trust in God, put their fears aside, and reached out. This is something I still need to work on. Lord, please help me put aside my fears, trust You, and reach out to my sister. I know You can restore this relationship. - Chris J.E.

I can see the progress I have made. I can tell my mind is stronger in You. I am even getting smarter! Amen to that, Lord, LOL! But please, Lord, see me through this - just for today, is all I ask. - Jim K.

Thinking about what I actually think about opens my perspective more to the scripture speaking about casting down thoughts and bringing thoughts captive. I am shocked by how little I thought in a godly manner. - Jordan M.

Lord, You have blessed us today with a wonderful day. The ground is covered with snow. I can see the birds playing in the snow. This is a wonderful view. Through my window while laying covered and warm in my bunk, I can enjoy this beautiful picture. - Miguel C.

Father, do not let my heart harden. Keep it soft and pliable so You have something to work with. It is easy in this place, with the attitudes we encounter, to allow our hearts to harden and bitterness and resentment to settle in. I know in my heart of hearts that all of us want to do the next right thing but I don't believe that we pray enough before making decisions that could impact us for the rest of our lives. Give us the desire to seek You and Your guidance in every decision we make. - Steven G.

Father, thank You for the English and Sociology courses! Thank You for beginning to "bridge the gap" in my mind and heart as I begin to realize how these other disciplines show your work throughout history. - Jason C.

It's Friday and I called my wife and talked to her a bit about the kids, plans for the day, etc. I hung up after telling her I love her. On my way to breakfast, I realized I forgot to pray with her. So, I turn around and headed back. I called and told her I was sorry for forgetting and we prayed. I love you, God. Thank You for watching and keeping my family together and safe. - Daniel L.



Christmas Chapel December 3, 2021

***Remember the prisoners, as though you were in prison with them ...
Hebrews 13:3***

Rejoice with us!

- Students are engaging in Gospel conversations on a regular basis and men are giving their lives to Jesus!
- Corrections Officers are seeking out PDP students and asking them to speak and pray with inmates that are experiencing difficulties!
- We have received an exemption from the COVID physical distancing requirement. All the students can now be in the classroom and chapel together!
- LARC is hosting Prison chaplains from around the state for their monthly meeting this month. They will have the opportunity to visit with the students and learn more about the program!

Petition the Lord with us . . .

- for PDP classes to continue even during lockdowns.
- for strong applicants to the Fall 2023 cohort. Applications will be made available in late March/early April.
- for funding to increase as we anticipate launching the next cohort.
- for ODOC Director Scott Crow's visit to our classroom April 1. Ask God to give understanding of His mighty work among us.

There is something to notice about the Gospel of Mark. The Greek word εὐθύς, meaning "immediately," is used 42 times. The author did this to emphasize the actions of Jesus. Jesus showed his dedication by walking the walk, not just speaking lofty platitudes and catchy theological slogans. We can see from the fast pace of Mark's Gospel that God wants us to be immediate because Jesus was immediate. Lord, You are so wise in Your ways and I need Your wisdom, but all of Your wisdom inside my mind is nothing unless I apply it and put it into action. Lord, I want to be a follower of Jesus who is immediate. Amen. - Eric C.

Spring Classes

- Vocation & Calling
- English: Classical Literature
- Introduction to Sociology
- New Testament History & Literature
- Christian Worldview
- The Mind of Christ



Applications for the Fall 2023 Cohort are almost ready to go out!

If you know of a male inmate who would be a good candidate for the Prison Divinity Program, please instruct him to stop by the Chaplain's office at his facility and request an application packet.