

# *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

Independence Day is just around the corner. We often associate independence with freedom. In fact, the Oxford Dictionary defines independence **as** freedom - the freedom to organize one's own life and make one's own decisions. However, biblically speaking, none of us is ever actually independent or free, in the usual sense of the word.

The Apostle Paul boldly declares that we are enslaved to either sin or God (Romans 6). Yet, we may find offensive the very idea that we are controlled by anything or anyone other than our own free will. Nowhere is this more evident than in John 8:33. Following Jesus' exciting proclamation, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," His audience immediately responded, "We have never been enslaved to anyone!" The very idea that Jesus would even suggest they were not their own masters was insulting. Bruce Milne, in his commentary on John's Gospel, said of this response, "They desire Jesus' gift of life as an additional adornment to the moral and spiritual status they presume to possess already by virtue of their Jewish inheritance. But Christ can never be had as an addition to our natural attainments, a part-Saviour who complements our personal achievements. He is the Saviour only of the desperate who have nowhere else to turn and no other on which to call."

God has granted me the privilege of walking alongside men who have lost the freedom enjoyed by most of society and, yet have found freedom of the heart. They have cried out to God in their desperation. The Son has set them free and **they** are free, indeed. May each of us find and celebrate the same.

*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.

One of the biggest milestones in my walk with Christ is He gave me the confidence to finally write my children and talk to them about why I'm in prison, not the crime for which I'm convicted, but the plan God has set beneath my feet. I struggled for years trying to find the right words to explain to them how sorry I was for leaving them. I was able to tell them in a way they would understand that God is an awesome God and that He didn't do this to me, but He is leading me through this. I had the wisdom to explain that even though I am in prison, I am so much better off now than I was. God has given me a relationship with Him that I was never willing to put in the work to have before. It was the most difficult letter I've ever written. How do you help them understand that you are better off in prison with God than in the world around them without God? I finally learned to truly trust Him - to not lean on my own understanding, but to let Him shine through me and direct my path. - Lloyd

*In the past six years, these years of my incarceration, I have discovered so much about myself compared to what I learned in the previous thirty-three years. Too much of my life has been embroiled in aimlessness and wandering. It wasn't until I sought to discover the great I AM that I discovered who I am. - Eric*

Father, I thank You that you placed me in such a wonderful place like this. Thank you because I was not only arrested; I was rescued by You! - Miguel

*I have found that the harder I try to perfect my relationship with God, the farther I seem to be from Him. It's not until I come to the full understanding that I can't write my own part in God's story that I am able to surrender and feel God's wisdom, love, and grace. - Brett*

I'm just feeling thankful for all You've done for me, Heavenly Father. You never left my family and never left me. I've been blessed with a beautiful wife and with enough time on this earth to get my life together and give it to You. I was broken, hurt, confused, ashamed, guilt-ridden, proud, and violent. I was a liar, criminal, thief, adulterer, manipulator, and con artist. You took a man that society threw away at 17 and washed him and cleansed him. They told me, "You'll never be anything but an inmate." Now, I'm more than an inmate. I belong to Your kingdom. Thank You, Jesus, for dying for my sins and giving me new life. - Delma

*This program is a godsend. I'm not sure I would know the things I know now without these courses. . . I've learned I am currently going through "spiritual rehabilitation" and God fully adores me and accepts me just as I am. I have also learned that rehab is a process and may still take a little more time until I'm completely cured. But that's okay. My relationship with God is all about time - time with Him. I do not have to worry about getting back into the game because He loves me not for what I do, but because I am His child. - Jason*





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

**Rejoice with us!**

- Our students were greatly encouraged by a visit from State Senators Dave Rader and Darcy Jech this month. We appreciate them spending time with us and learning more about the program!
- Students are winning daily spiritual battles!
- Opportunities continue to arise for Dr. Perkins to share the PDP story in churches!
- Visits from family members and friends have returned to normal. We thank them for supporting their loved ones!
- New prayer partners and donors have joined our support team this month!

**Petition the Lord with us . . .**

- for at least one gang leader in LARC to give his life to Christ this summer!
- for the Lord to elevate the prayer lives of our students throughout the summer months while reading books on prayer and praying with fellow students as prayer partners!
- for the Holy Spirit to shape minds and hearts around our common purpose of serving and glorifying God!
- for instructors and students as they continue preparation for fall classes!

Cody participates in an end of life ministry in the infirmary with inmates who are terminally ill. He writes:

I watched a man die today. It's not the first time I've seen it. I want to believe he got saved. I know he was seeking before he went. I only got to spend 15-20 minutes with him before he left. In that time, I was able to pray over him, read a devotion, talk to him, and read the Word of God to him. The last thing he heard, if he could hear, was the words of Jesus. I read him John 14:1-6 and let him know Jesus came for him. I told him to see the Father all he had to do was accept Jesus. . . Within minutes of these prayers and reading of Scripture, he left this earth. I hope with all my heart he's kickin' it with Jesus right now, waiting for us to get home to tell us he made it!



***Do You Want to Help Increase Awareness of the Prison Divinity Program?***

- Share your e-newsletter with family members and friends.
- Inform us of others who may prefer to receive a printed copy of the newsletter.
- Invite Dr. Perkins to speak to your church congregation, civic club, men's or women's group, etc.
- Bookmark [www.okbu.edu/pdp](http://www.okbu.edu/pdp) and visit on a frequent basis for updates.