



Chaplain Rick Johnson

Pacific Youth Correctional Ministries

Fall 2019

rick.pacificyouth.org

God's Plan For Me

My name is Ramiro and I am currently being held in Juvenile Hall facing a potential murder charge. This has been a very difficult season of my life and my faith in God is what has been sustaining me.

There is a verse in Jeremiah 29 that says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

This is the verse that has spoken to me and given me hope because it was God's written promise to people who were going through a difficult time. The difficult situation I am in will not be permanent and I will someday have a future. I would like to give a special thanks to the PCM volunteer Julius and to Chaplain Rick for being a special part of my life. My Christian walk is helping me maintain a positive attitude and I am taking one day at a time trusting in God's plan for me as revealed in his Word.

Ramiro - Juvenile Hall

Now I'm Free

I'm a sinner in need of a Savior
Trying to look for You
Forgive me of my sins
For the things that I might do
The only time I feel safe
Is on my knees in that place
Thank you for everything you give
Despite the position that I am in
I'm trying to say that I thank you
Who would I be if I wasn't made new
Thank you for the family you gave
From the start you were trying to save
Caught up in the stuff I was in
I don't regret the things I did
Because now I'm free from a life of sin

Oscar - Juvenile Hall

A Week In My Life

8/25

The day began at 5:45 a.m. with devotions at home. I headed to my church services at Juvenile Hall and the Youth Guidance Center at 7:30 a.m. I finished at 11:45 a.m. and rushed over to a local church to enjoy part of the service. After lunch I went back to the hall to meet with a youth who will be heading to the DJJ facility in Ventura for a long sentence. We have been meeting off and on for over two years. At 4:30 p.m. I drove to Westminster to pick up Johnny and met Andy at the Panda Express near Angel Stadium for dinner. Next we walked into the stadium for the Harvest Crusade and sat with Andy's aunt who was in the very top row of section 415. It was Johnny's first time in Angel Stadium. Andy said he had watched the Harvest Crusade on TBN in prison for many years.

8/26

I set my alarm to wake up before 7:00 a.m. because I had to make an online appointment to visit Adan in prison the following Saturday. Andy's driving test at the DMV is today so I picked him up at his mom's and then he drove around to practice. I received a call from Joey in Solano State Prison and had Andy tell him what he needs to do if he wants to stay out of trouble. We got in line at the DMV at 2:30 p.m. and then waited another half hour in the car for Andy's turn. He came back 20 minutes later and gave me the thumbs up. I dropped Andy off and went to Juvenile Hall to meet with Gabriel in Unit Y who had turned in a request. At home I studied the passage in Romans I will be teaching from this week.

8/27

This morning I had training with Teen Challenge so I can continue to volunteer at the Timothy House. The training was on how to de-escalate angry youth. It was over at noon and I drove to the Packing House in Anaheim to meet Joshua for lunch.

8/27

Joshua had not been in touch for three weeks, so it was good to find out he had improved his living situation and had enough hours at his coffee house job to pay the bills. After that I went to Juvenile Hall to meet with Michael who has been incarcerated for the past year. His dad was killed in front of him and this is his first time in the hall. Curtis wrote me from the Theo Lacy Jail and asked me to meet with him so at 7:00 p.m. I walked down there and within a few minutes I was meeting with him in the visiting booth via phone. After that I headed home to do more studying.

8/28

This morning I had another four hours of training with Teen Challenge that went well. In the afternoon I met with a couple youth who had turned in requests and with Oscar in Unit Z who is going to court on a serious charge. At 7:00 p.m. I drove over to the Youth Guidance Center and led the singing and presented the gospel at the weekly bible study. Afterwards I returned home to do more work on my lesson.

8/29

I got to Teen Challenge at 8:00 a.m. again and the training this morning included ways to protect yourself if attacked. A Christian probation officer contacted me about meeting with one of his guys at the Youth Reporting Center. Joseph started talking about his faith so his PO asked if he wanted to meet with me. We met for the first time and I heard about his troubled upbringing. I offered to start going through my trauma workbook with him and he agreed. The Youth Leadership Academy church service was moved to Unit Q because of some construction work, so I had to move our equipment there for the 5:30 p.m. service. Nine youth attended and I taught from Romans 13:1-7 on obeying the government. Afterwards I had dinner and then met with Daniel in Unit T. Daniel was shot during his crime and was put on life support because he was not expected to live.

8/30

I got up in the morning and quickly packed my suitcase and then drove to the last day of training at Teen Challenge. Everything from CPR to basic first aid was covered. As soon as it was done, I got in my car and started driving to Coalinga. It took two hours to get out of Southern California due to Labor Day traffic. I stopped for dinner around 5:30 p.m. in Kettleman City and then got to my motel room about an hour later. I was there to visit Adan the next day. He was transferred to prison last Christmas Day and this was his first visit.



This newsletter contains artwork, testimonies, and a poem submitted by the youth we serve (with some editing). Thank you for reading it and for your part in keeping me on the mission field full time.

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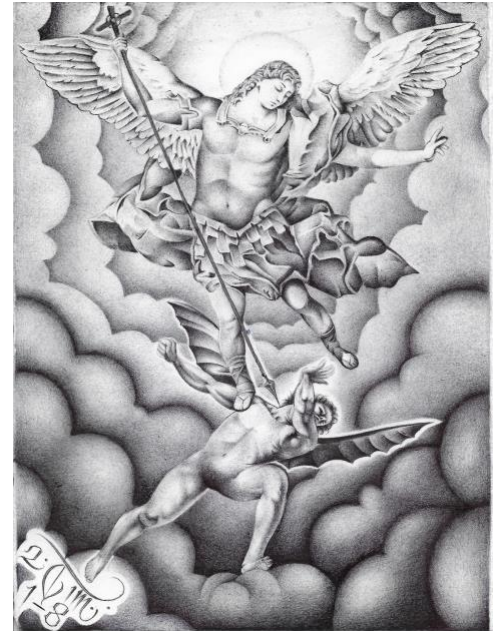
Footsteps

I grew up without a father and followed in the footsteps of my older brother who was a gang member. Feelings of abandonment, worthlessness, and hopelessness made me into an angry kid who didn't care. Right now, I realize how hard my mom and later my probation officer tried to keep me alive.

Today, I am on the straight and narrow path striving to better myself by distancing myself from gang or drug activity. I am proud of the person I am becoming because I am dealing with my issues, going to pastor's school, and maintaining a 4.0 grade point average as I work towards an Associate of Arts degree and vocational certification. I want to be another example of someone who overcame his criminal background and did not let adversity and struggles define who they are. I believe God is going to give me another chance at freedom.

Many people have come and gone from my life over the years, but the Lord has kept one of his servants (Chaplain Rick) along side of me.

Christian - Pelican Bay State Prison



Chris has been in prison for a few years and recently shared how some artwork in a newsletter on the literature table caught his eye on the way out of his first Juvenile Hall church service. The newsletter contained a reference to John 3:16 so he requested a bible and that was how he became connected with our ministry. The picture above is one he drew for me to share.