



Pacific Youth Correctional Ministries

Serving Orange County Probation Facilities Since 1981



Recently I returned a call from someone I had met in the college ministry at Big Valley Grace in Modesto. He was responsible for finding me an affordable room to rent when I first started in the ministry. Steven and I had not spoken in 35 years, but he remembered the story I had shared about finding my lost daytimer. After years of resisting God’s will, Steven is pursuing the ministry and wanted to contact everyone who had been a positive influence in his life.

The Lord knows when I need to hear something encouraging and every once in a while, I am blessed by the gracious words of others. On page two, I will once again share the most encouraging comments I have received this past year via a text message, a card, an email, a letter, a phone message, or in person.



Ruben’s brother had been in Juvenile Hall many years ago and I had been in touch with the family off and on since then. Ruben and Moxy started the “You’re My Best Friend” Show a couple years ago and last July I was invited on as a guest. Their Facebook page has almost 900 followers and that is where the show gets most of its listeners. I didn’t get a list of questions ahead of time but was able to respond to all that was asked. I have another Zoom interview soon with a former probation officer who is teaching a class at Cal State Fullerton.



The photo above was taken on the first night my homegroup started meeting on Zoom. We met every Tuesday night from April through June and then started up again in September. I became the leader of the group out of necessity and was the only person who had a Zoom account. On average, there are nine of us online for 90-minutes where we review the message from the previous Sunday and share prayer requests.



Last January, Teen Challenge contacted me about speaking at an upcoming graduation ceremony which I am honored to do whenever I am asked. The month of May was selected and I started looking forward to the opportunity. Men have continued to complete the three months at the induction center and need to be celebrated before heading to the facility over in Riverside. Instead of standing before the graduates, students, guests, and staff, I appeared on a screen. My fifteen-minute message that day was from Genesis 32 where Jacob could no longer run but had to face his brother Esau. I entitled my talk, “What Can Happen in Twenty Years?”



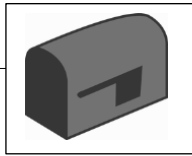
One day last June, I was dropping off my handouts for the church service and was stopped by the Assistant Director at the Youth Leadership Academy. One of her tasks was to plan for when Max (the dog at YLA) would need to be put down. I was asked, “Do you have any ideas about how to hold a memorial service for a pet?” I had never been asked that question before but said I would look into it. After reaching out to a couple friends, I put together an outline of a possible gathering for Max and emailed it to the assistant director. She responded by saying, “Thank you so much. We are holding a meeting this Thursday to discuss what to do and this is very helpful.” Max is still alive and well, so I hope to be back inside the facility before he is gone.

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Greetings Brother,

I received your letter and it put a huge smile on my face. It is the small things that matter most right now. Every day I see evil around me and people not staying sober. I am so happy that my Savior has delivered me from my addiction. The Lord is so good. Thank you for sending me the lesson on the Book of Job and for always being there for me.

DB

Chaplain Rick,

I was looking at my "to do" list and writing you back was at the top. Thank you for your last letter. I really enjoy hearing about all the great things the Lord is doing in your life. Recently there has been a decline in church attendance and some of the brothers have fallen away. The enemy gained some ground and we need to get it back. We had a severe salmonella outreach last October and were told it was the fourth largest in United States history. Many inmates got sick but God spared me and my cellie. Last Saturday I had to co-chair an AA meeting, host a PREP meeting, and give an exhortation at two chapel services. God has sent us a faithful brother from San Diego who opens the chapel doors and we have four services each Saturday. I am enclosing a picture that I took last April with a couple of the brothers.

AR

Dear Chaplain Rick,

Thank you for the birthday card and your last letter. Your updates are highly appreciated. I am taking some classes that are bible based but have been slacking on them. Time is flying by because I am too distracted. It's time for a reality check because I know I should be making better choices. Thank you for all your guidance. You are an awesome mentor.

DD

Chaplain Rick,

I know I am way past due but happy birthday! Thank you for my card. I was in the hole when I received it and was there for over five months. I didn't know anything about COVID-19 until you wrote about it in your letter. It was like a movie when I read what you said life was like. I got kicked out of the Youthful Offender Program and will spend 11 months in the SHU. My journey so far hasn't been as bad as I first thought it would be. I planned on calling you as soon as possible but lost my phone privileges for 60 days. I pray that all is well with you. I look forward to hearing from you.

AG

Dear Rick,

Last week I was listening to K-LOVE and they played the song *Everlasting Love* that you used to sing. Hearing that song took me back a decade to some of my fondest memories. I remember you coming to see me in Mod-J at Theo Lacy and miss feeling comfortable talking with you about anything. I hope the young men and women in Juvenile Hall know how they are being showered with God's love. Thank you for your last letter. I am moved and inspired by the stories you share and your love for God's work. This last year I have accomplished many small goals that I never thought were possible. I've learned many new things but most importantly, I've been keeping out of trouble. My college facilitators are very impressed with my work, but I feel something is missing. I've never felt so lonely in my life. I used to desensitize myself from my feelings but now I realize that love is what keeps us alive. I got a cellie a few months ago which was the only human contact I had in over a year. Send my love to Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Masters. I am the student I am today because they believed I was smart.

CM

Rick,

I know it's been a while since you've heard from me. I feel like I have wasted enough of your time and can't begin to express the gratitude I have for you. You have tried to help me since I was 12 years old! The main reason I am writing is to see if you are okay and healthy. This pandemic has a lot of people getting sick and I hope you aren't one of them. I was supposed to transfer to Ironwood but am stuck here in Ad-Seg because things are locked down. Another inmate has me marked as their enemy and he doesn't want to sign a compatibility chrono. I think I really made God mad and he is tearing me down. I am starting to read my bible more but it is difficult because I don't have the faith I once had. I keep feeling unworthy, unclean, and impure. I don't think I can be forgiven for some of the things I have done.

BG

Letters used by permission

"Thank you for passing on all your ideas. They help us here in San Diego more than you can imagine."

Fellow Staff Member

"Today you helped me find God."

Incarcerated Youth

"Thank you so much for your words at Jack's service. You were such a testimony to him."

Family Relative

"Thank you for sharing scriptural truth with some very key sentences that opened my eyes."

Church Member

"I look back at the good times in my life and realize you were a part of what made them good."

Inmate in Prison

"Thank you for your prayer and for having us get on our knees."

Pastor at Prayer Walk

"I want to thank you for being there for me when I was in Juvenile Hall. Your time and attention meant a lot to me."

Released Youth

"Your diet, exercise, and lifestyle have served you well. Thanks for taking good care of yourself."

My Boss

"I watched your visual newsletter and was so blessed and encouraged."

PCM Volunteer