

Intro to "FROM JESUS—WITH LOVE" FOR PRISON MINISTRIES

By Maria

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Dear Family,

SOME of you may remember that I put a plug in the *Grapevine* a few years ago, asking you for input on prison ministries. In that notice I shared with you that the Lord had put a burden on my heart to put together a booklet or tool to reach prisoners, some personalized messages from Jesus for them, words of love speaking directly to their hearts and addressing their unique needs. Simply put, the idea was to publish a *From Jesus—With Love* booklet for prisoners, or for you to use in your prison witnessing ministry.

2. Here are some excerpts from that original notice, as a refresher for you, explaining the original vision the Lord gave me:

Quite a few of our Family members are involved in prison ministries, and this is a very important ministry. While there are other Christians and missionaries who minister to those in prison, there's a vast difference between them and us, and the Lord has given us a special gift of being able to pass on His love and forgiveness to these very needy men and women through His living Words, which have the power to bring a ray of joy and hope into their darkened lives, and a reason to go on living.

I've always had a burden for prisoners and those involved in prison ministries. When I was 12 or 13, my aunt put me in touch with a long-term prisoner. We corresponded for several years, and when he finally got out of prison, I was there to meet him and we went to a meal together. I'm sure that experience planted the seed that gave me a burden to reach prisoners.

There are millions of prisoners worldwide, and a good number of these are in prison unjustifiably. Prisoners are often much more desperate than people who think they're free. If we can reach them and win them to the Lord, they in turn can reach their fellow inmates, and on the witness goes. Many will get out of prison later and have the potential to be tremendous on-fire witnesses for the Lord.

Just think what a powerful tool a specialized *From Jesus—With Love* booklet could be for these poor folks who need the Lord's love and forgiveness so desperately. They feel they are the worst of the worst, and they wonder how God can really love them. Sure, there's Christian literature out there, but it's not really directed to them. I'm sure that the Lord would love to speak directly to their hearts, showing them that He understands what difficulties they go through on a daily basis—the grit and grime, the horrible experiences, sympathizing with their fears and tears—and then giving them His love and peace, and eternal life. (*End of excerpts from Grapevine 110.*)

3. I then asked those of you involved with prison ministries to write in with any experiences you'd had, testimonies, or ideas for this booklet. As a result, I did hear from a number of you, for which I am very thankful. But unfortunately, due to lack of personnel to help me work on this project, we haven't been able to invest the time needed to see this plan through to completion.

4. But the good news is that slowly but surely the Lord has helped us to get the beginnings of this booklet together. We haven't yet prepared all of the messages that we have received so far, but we have some ready that I wanted to send you (in GN 1166). I would have preferred to have been able to present you with a full booklet, but since that wasn't possible, the Lord gave us the idea to send you what we have ready rather than waiting for when we have more.

5. (*Jesus*:) I have given beautiful messages for prisoners that will be a tremendous blessing to those who are working with prisoners and have prison ministries. Some of the messages will even be applicable to other witnessing situations, and wouldn't only be limited to use in prisons—although, of course, that is the main audience for these messages and what they are best geared for.

6. The idea of publishing these messages to the Family in smaller segments is a good idea and

My will. Otherwise, if you wait until you have a whole booklet's worth prepared, it could be a long time before they get into the hands of the Family who really need them, and that would mean a lot of valuable time wasted—time when those messages could have been used in feeding the sheep and drawing them closer to Me. And because this is something you have promised the Family, I wish to push it through for their sake.

7. There will be all kinds of messages for prisoners. Some are messages speaking about bitterness, and can be given to prisoners who are battling that. Then others are on My care for loved ones outside of prison, and those can be given to prisoners who battle that specifically. So there is something for everyone, and something for the things that each person goes through.

8. These messages can stand on their own. I've given them in such a way that they cover a complete thought or spiritual truth. They're short messages, bite-sized messages, but that's really all that some of the prisoners would be able to handle, as those who are Christians are mostly very new ones, and those who are on their way to becoming Christians often can't handle a lot of "preaching." So because the messages are short and can stand on their own, they can be gotten out a few at a time, and used according to the need. Then later you can receive feedback from the Family who have tried out the messages with their prison flocks, and see if it would be worthwhile to publish a book with all of the messages.



9. (Jesus:) These messages for the prisoners are going to be a very powerful tool in the hands of My Family. My Words are going to get into hearts that have never heard My truth—and it will be My specific truths, My specific Words, My tailored counsel for prisoners. Prisoners don't usually receive special attention from anyone, so they will be very encouraged to know that I have sent them My personalized Words, that the Family brings them letters from Me. Most prisoners love to receive mail, to get letters from the outside world; it's one of their only forms of communication. So receiving these love letters from Me is going to make a big impact.

10. It's good to plan to get out the messages in segments, because then they can be put to use right away. There are so many of My imprisoned

children searching, hungry, lonely, in fear, and in need of My truth. They are a captive audience, and each day that goes by that they don't hear My Words is a day that is wasted. The sooner you can get even one selection of messages into the hands of the Family, the sooner My prisoner children will be strengthened—and will in turn witness to others in their world and share My truth with them. Even one message in one prison will go a long way, because the inmates will pass it around.

11. That's another thing prisoners love to do: Read. They have so much time on their hands, they have to have pastimes to keep their sanity, and one of the most common is reading. Sometimes they'll read something simply because they're bored, and not really because they're interested. But even these will stumble across My truth and Word and be changed by it. My personal messages will touch hearts, change lives, and comfort the downtrodden. I will go where no one has ever gone before and do things in a new way.

12. (Mama:) So this is exactly what we plan to do, dear Family. With this notice you'll be receiving the batch of messages we have ready for you, in GN format, titled "Freedom Within!" Please feel free to begin using them in your witnessing, by either reading them to the prisoners or sheep you minister to, or by photocopying the pages and giving out copies. You have permission to use them as you feel led, and according to what the Lord shows you is best in your situation.

13. And if you have any ideas for future messages, or reactions to these, or accounts of how those you give these messages to benefit from them, please write in and share them with me. Then if we are able to devote more time to receiving and preparing more messages for prisoners in the future, we'll take your input into consideration. I don't want to promise that we will, as I don't like to make promises I'm not sure we can keep. But if they are a success and they are helpful in your witnessing, then we'll definitely pray about and consider doing more in the future as we are able.

14. I love you so much, dear Family, and pray that these messages will be a blessing to you and many others.

Much love in our merciful Husband,
Mama