

Sparrow's Flight

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." —Matthew 10:29



An open letter
by and for
God's people
in prison

October, 2006

Gentle Spirit

by Albert

I've known Albert through letters and mutual friends for a few years now, and finally got to visit him face to face at the California prison where he is held. Although he came from a culture of violence, his years with the Lord have taught him peace and true gentleness. He shares the following from his heart.

I can honestly say I've struggled for years being gentle to anyone that was rude to me or simply believed they were better than me, because I couldn't meet their expectations. At times being gentle to people has been difficult for me. It pleases God when we set an example as he would. It is my purpose to do God's will and be fruitful. I could only have this gentle spirit through Christ Jesus. If I don't keep my behavior in check my attitude towards those who disrespect me with cruel words will lead me to lose my temper. I would respond negatively. When I'm going through difficult situations, I have to stop and think, is it worth losing my testimony in my Lord Jesus Christ? The most important thing for me to do is to repent from the thought I was about to put into action. (John 1:9 NKJV) *"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all*

unrighteousness." I can only have peace when I'm in the Spirit. I will be able to be faithful in responding with gentleness to those who spitefully use or disrespect me. I can share the gospel in a gentle way with all who see something different about me, the unusual thing they can't figure out is the Spirit of the Lord that indwells all believers who have repented. The new man has a blessed future in eternity. It is our purpose to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and bring others to the knowledge of His grace, by being indwelled in the Spirit of gentleness. I'm able to approach strangers and share my testimony. (Timothy 2:24-26) *"And the servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, be able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they*

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About this Newsletter:

This is the fourth edition of Sparrow's Flight, designed to be a means of encouraging each other and sharing our Christian lives and the redemptive power of God's grace and guidance. It is open to contributions of letters from Christians both in and out of prison. First names only will be used in most cases, for a number of reasons, and contact information will be completely confidential. New editions will be published as material is available. Send letter contributions (no money please) to:

TFU - Attn: Sparrow's Flight Editor
P.M.B. #184
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Testimony

by Daniel

Greetings in Christ Jesus our Lord. I am 22 years old and have been walking with the Lord faithfully since November of 1998. Presently, by His will, I am serving a sentence of 15 years to life for murder, and am enduring the Lord's chastening.

Initially, I accepted Christ into my life at the age of 14, in 1993, but as an adolescent, my heart was focused more on worldly things and the desires of the flesh. I was born and raised in a city in Southern California, to two very loving parents and am the sibling of two brothers. My family was middle class and my town was relatively low income, but my parents eventual divorce, my sinful rebellion and my anger would lead me to a destructive path.

As a teenager, I began drinking only to get drunk, smoking weed, and was fornicating with different girls. I also looked for fulfillment by joining a street gang to make others fear and respect me. My love for sex and violence was unbelievable. I would get enjoy-

ment out of hurting other people, who were made in God's image just like me.

I became deceived by the enemy and the street life and loved living fast. I got in so deep that it led me to killing another young man in cold blood in November, 1996. I was 17 years old and for the next two years, I thought I was invincible. But in November of 1998, I found out that my girlfriend was pregnant. God was showing me, that in order to raise a child, I first had to change. Soon after, I once again asked Christ to rule my life. But this time my heart was set to please Him. My walk wasn't easy, and since the Lord changed my outlook on life, the burden of my shedding blood was heavy and more than I could bear.

On the night of April 19, 2000, the Holy Spirit led me to turn myself in for the murder I committed. The authorities would never have caught me, and said the case probably

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Gentle Spirit (continued)

may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by to do his will." I shouldn't let my temper or attitude overrun my spirit even when I come into a situation with a person who just has an argumentative attitude or if I see someone that I dislike because he or she treats me bad. It would be wrong for me to even speak things harmful to people or about them. I should always be ready for the opportunity to treat all persons with gentleness, kindness. (Titus 3:12 NKJV) "To speak evil of no one, to be gentle showing all humility to all men." I have been able to receive the wisdom that is from above in the word of God. It teaches me to be gentle, willing to yield good fruits for Christ, to walk in His pure wisdom and produce pure fruit. I no

longer will have to struggle with bad attitudes or disrespectful behavior. I could surrender it and be productive in fruitful labor. I have been able to overcome all character defects that hindered my walk, through the spirit of gentleness. And without bias towards anyone. I would like to move on and do greater things in the Lord Jesus Christ and be fruitful in gentleness. It is possible for anyone who is willing to be a servant to go out and sow good seed for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope that this short article has been helpful to you, that it has given you encouragement to do the practical thing, to please your Savior in all you do. (Colossians 3:12 GWT) "As holy people whom God has chosen and loved, be sympathetic, kind, humble, gentle and patient."

Testimony (continued)

would never have been solved, but God knew. Nothing is hidden from His eyes and He has led me to true resentment, and for the first time in years I have a clear conscience.

The Lord's mercy endures forever. I could have received a harsher sentence, but because of my obedience to His Word, He has blessed

me. Jesus has led me to leave everything I held dear on this earth for Him. He says we must love Him more than family, or anything the world offers. The Lord has given me peace, and is making me strong in His mighty Spirit. My prayer is that what God has done in my life, would lead many to true resentment, to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not judge, or you too will be judged...

(Matthew 7:1)

This is one verse in the Bible that most people seem to know. We don't want people to judge us, particularly if we are doing something we know is wrong. Most people don't know that Jesus also said (John 7:24), "...judge righteous judgement". Judgement goes hand in hand with justice. Justice is an attribute of God (Psalms 140:12 and many other verses). The first government established by God for his people was made up of judges (Exodus 18:13-26). Even in the New Testament, Christians are told to judge among themselves in cases of church discipline (1 Corinthians 6:1-6). So then why does Jesus say "do not judge"?

By reading and understanding the *whole* Bible, it's clear that although we need to judge behavior and promote justice, we are to recognize that we are not the *ultimate* judges. "There is only one lawgiver and judge..." (James 4:12) We must be very careful that we don't condemn, seek to find fault with, or find reasons to write off our neighbor, particularly those of the Christian body, the Church. Another thing we must not do is condemn *ourselves*. Jesus has redeemed us; paid the price for our wrongdoing. We have *no right* to deny that (1 John 3:19-20). Lastly, we must be careful that we don't let others' judgement influence us more than God's (Matthew 10:28, Acts 4:19). If we let fear of man control us more than fear of God, we are committing *idolatry* (any time we put anything before God). Fearing God *sets us free* from fear of man, and assurance of God's love takes our fear away (1 John 4:18). "His grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved." —*Editor*

Make Prayer a Habit

ROMANS 12:12 NRSV "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer."

Prayer is a habit that, like every other good habit, must be developed. You know you need to pray. You need God's help, His wisdom and His guidance. But you must persevere in prayer. The activities of life try to keep you from praying. So persevere!

LUKE 21:36 BBE "But keep watch at all times with prayer, that you may be strong enough to come through all these things and take your place before the Son of man."

In communing with God, you gain strength that comes in no other way. You find the wisdom and courage to face life and overcome.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17-18 ICB

17 "Never stop praying. 18 Give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus."

Learn to always include God in your thoughts. Ask Him about everything. Cultivate your relationship by continual communication. And one of the most important things for you to communicate to God is your gratitude. Thank God for everything. Don't relegate prayer to just when you're on your knees. As you go about your activities, include God by constant communion with Him. Talk to God about everything!

SAY THIS: Lord, help me to develop the habit of continual communication with you.

*Servant of the Lord,
Dawn O'brien*

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Send Your Prayer Requests, Praise Reports and Your Gift Offerings To: Dawn's Heartfelt Corner, 380 S. State Road 434, Ste. 1004, #247, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
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