

## ***Letters from Prison***

April 10, 2011

Hello Marie,

First and foremost I'd like to thank you for the photos with captions and article titled "Spiraling Into Irrelevancy" by Coach Dave. But I must admit, I enjoy your own personal stories the most. So I appreciate the time you take to afford me that treat.

Yes, my friend, we've taken the train straight out of hell and riding it down the track according to God's will. Truthfully I'm still a work in progress in the beginning stages, but I know I'm finally headed in the right direction. Your story, "The Glory of Our Prison Days" is a true reality. My first year of this prison term I had that "woe is me" mentality. Then I picked up the Bible. Aptly named, this "cocoon" process has produced an awareness of a seep seated decay as I sit and reflect, allowing me to grow under a new light. What really hit home in your story is your statement that, "My prison days will last as long as it takes to turn into a new creation." Oh, how true that is! I understand what you mean by that statement of course, but in my case it's literally true. I've spent 20 years in prison on an "installment plan", meaning coming in and out my whole adult life with 20 years actually inside these walls, ten years being my longest stretch at one time.

As far back as I can remember, each and every time I've come to prison the Lord has attempted to approach me in many different ways. One time to my utter surprise, even a prison guard was walking the tier and as I stood at my bars waiting for him to pass, he abruptly stopped, turned to me and said that the Lord wanted him to talk to me. Through the years complete strangers who were also prisoners would convey that same message and each and every time, I would brush it off and continue my same pattern of self destruction. Truth be told, I didn't want to be one of the many people who pick up the Bible in prison "acting" Christian, then upon release, hypocritically go back to their old ways. In my opinion, that's what gives a real Christian a bad rap, and in essence undermines Christianity. I really never wanted to take that step until my heart was fully committed. Besides, I fear messing with God, if I'm not serious.

It's obvious my prison days have lasted a long time due to my lust for a party lifestyle. Well, here I am again with a 4 year term, only this time my disposition has changed. Eve picked up the Bible and that renovation you spoke of has begun to cleanse every fiber of my being as I move towards a new and disciplined life under

God's chosen path. I know from past experience that I must change everything. In order for my transformation to prosper, I can't even dream of my old lifestyle. One small interaction with my past and I will fall back into the abyss. I must start fresh with one singular thought in mind. Jesus! My life has been a testament to the story you told. As I said before, I understood what you meant. I don't have to be "in" prison to be imprisoned. I can get out and still be imprisoned if I don't change. I must give my full attention to the Lord or I'm out. The time is now, Marie, and your guidance has been instrumental in making it happen.

Well, my friend, I'm going to close this out until next time. Take care and extend my love to the family.

Love and respect always,

Thomas

## **Marie's Answer**

April 15, 2011

*Hello dear Thomas,*

*Years are but a second to God and eternity, and I guess you were waiting for the pure gospel to come your way. It has to do with the end of the age. Or as the Bible states, "In the fullness of time God sends forth His son, born of a woman, born under the law."*

*Now my way of saying all this stuff is thus wise:*

*When we have come of age, God impregnates our soul with the Holy Spirit and that starts the soul a-changing.*

*Of course the change is called the work of the cross and it comes by humbling ourselves daily while it is yet called today.*

*Bye, my dear Thomas.... I must say, one thing you learned in prison is that beautiful hand writing. Bye, my dearly beloved.*

*Marie* 