

(Share this with a friend)

Spring 2020

# Prison Epistles

## **Okay God, here goes...**

So first of all, in my life I've had the opportunity to manage and quit a few places and one of the things I've most definitely learned is that you shouldn't ask people to do something that you're not willing to do, if you are able.

I grew up in Duncanville, TX. It's just south of Dallas and really not very big. When I was there, their High School sports were pretty big but that's about it. I got married at 27 in a house, not a church. I make that point because my entire life I was an atheist. I could have even been called a mocker or a scoffer; God was a crutch that people used to get by. All of the people that grew up knowing God have my respect. That truly is my greatest regret. Especially looking back and seeing all the times He was trying to reach me. Just stupidity on my part. Arrogance. Pride.

I recall going to church with my grandparents as a young kid, though most of the details are very hazy. It seems to me that the environment was very nice, very clean, but I couldn't tell you one word of what was said. And, I never bothered to learn. Because, who

cares. It's so fantastical, it couldn't possibly be true. Idiot!!!!

So all this wasted time. All this wasted life. However, there's good news. It's not too late. I'm still around. I still have a chance to get it right. So here I find myself.

First though, if anyone has ever been on a plane you know they tell you in the event of an emergency you have to put on your oxygen before helping others. You first must be saved in order to save others. If any of you have had experience with atheism, there seems to be three different types. The first being the "I'm too smart to believe in God and here are the reasons God doesn't and couldn't exist-blah, blah, blah." Now, I could see how you might think that would be where I fell in, but no. I had no clue why God couldn't exist. I had never read one word out of the Bible. In my head though, the stuff I did know didn't make sense and so there. The second type is the tragic atheist. These unfortunate people have been struck by tragedy and can't understand how a loving God could allow bad things to happen. They think there's no real good reason for that. Humans cause tragedy and God must allow their free will. The third type is where I would put myself. It's really the "good life" atheist. Basically, what that means is not that I was living the "good life" but that I was living "a" good life. There was no real tragedy to cause me to cry out to God.

But then, eventually, and inevitably tragedy will strike and it did. I found myself at the bottom of a massive hole that I had dug myself into. Cliché coming: when we reach the bottom, there's only one way to look. Up. And looking back down on me is the same One who has always been there. I just never had the cause to look.

At my county jail, you really only had one option for reading material, the Bible. So I started reading from the beginning. Then, I kept going all the way through Genesis to Revelation. Then I read it again. And again. Until I finally said, "Okay God, here goes..."

Now please don't get me wrong. There was no movie quality moment. There were no lights shining down on me as I was on my knees crying out for help. That's just not me. The plain fact was, I wanted to go home and there didn't seem to be any earthly way that was going to happen. So I looked elsewhere. My prayer consisted of, "God, if you exist and you want me to believe in you, then let me go home." I can look back now and practically hear God laughing.

Because, of course, God most definitely does not work that way. However, even though it was done under less than honorable pretenses, step one was done. I reached out and even though He didn't respond the way I wanted of course, the door was open. The line of communication was open. I continued to hold on to hope that He would give me what I wanted, but I also came to realize that I had no true relationship with Him. I knew nothing about Him or how He worked. I just figured you say you believe in Him and

2

He starts giving you stuff you want. The cynic in me, that part that never believed in God, saw the supreme irony in that. One of the things I mocked was that God was people's genie, granting wishes and prayers. Now I'm the one asking for a wish to be granted and it most definitely wasn't happening. So I continued to read the Bible and when they finally started bringing in other books, I would search for all the religious books I could get my hands on. I would lie awake and talk to God and think about what I was reading and try to piece it all together. I had a few people I could talk to about it and they helped as well. There was a very infrequent church service that I attended. All of it was helping to varying degrees. I was really starting to learn who God was and how He acted, even toward those He loved. I kind of noticed a bit of a trend in scripture too. God seemed to have no problem punishing those whom He called His people. Wait! What?! That's not the way it's supposed to be. He's my genie. I need a wish granted. I want to go home. That revelation kind of set me back.

What do I do now? He's not going to free me. Why am I bothering? But I didn't stop. I couldn't. I told myself I would. The mocker kept creeping up inside me, but unlike most of my life, I didn't let him win. I felt like I had all the evidence I needed in front of me and I couldn't go back now. Nor did I want to. I didn't want to be alone anymore.

Even when I was surrounded by people, I was always alone. Barriers built, emotions cut off, I finally started

# Renewing of a Mind

## PART 1

I respected him very much. I learned a lot from him. He was a good person, respectful, caring and considerate. He was my gang brother. He was a convict. He was much shorter in height than me, but I looked up to him. He paroled while we were in ad seg. I hoped he would make it out in the free-world.

While out on the streets, he was accused of snitching, violating a fundamental rule of being a convict. They said he signed a statement against someone in a gang and drug related murder. Some of us asked for proof that he did it and we go it. When he signed that statement he literally signed his death sentence in our gang. He put a "hit" on himself. All of my respect for him withered and died. As far as I was concerned he was dead already.

I felt let down by him. He betrayed our gang. I felt he betrayed me and everything we stood for as men, as gang brothers and as convicts. I had been a Christian for well over 1 ½ years when this happened. Yet, I never thought anything about him, his feelings or what he went through as a person.

A year or so later I started to truly get to know Christ. Because of this I quit the gang. A few months after this, he came back to prison. I saw him before he saw me, as he was coming in, pushing a laundry cart, his head bent

to let someone in and I didn't want to lose that. So obviously, as I write this God did allow man's punishment upon me and I came here. But, I didn't come here alone. I brought my Father and He goes with me wherever I go. He comforts me whenever I need it. He listens. He responds. He leads me down the path He means me to be on. He listens when I resist and gently corrects me. It's my choice what road I take, but now I have a map and a destination. So my desire is to bring as many with me as I can. I don't know everything. I don't have all the answers, but I am going to try my best to listen to God and do what He wants because that's what I want to.

*Bryan's Testimony*

## THE SECOND CRUCIFIXION

**They crushed the thorns into His  
brow**

**And struck hard blows that day.  
Oh Lord, I would not treat Thee  
so...I only walked away.**

**They drove the nails into His hands  
And raised the cross on high,  
O Lord that men should be this vile...  
I only passed Thee by.**

**But blinded eyes and hearts of stone  
Will spurn a love like Thine.  
O Lord, I struck the cruelest blows;  
The sharpest thorns were mine!**

Victoria B. Johnson

low. As he neared me I said, “\_\_\_\_\_ what did you do?” He said he would tell me all about it later. To myself I was asking why he snitched. Then I noticed something very strange. There wasn’t any anger in me! I no longer felt let down or betrayed by him. I felt sorry for him, for the mess he was in. I felt pity and concern. I wanted to tell him everything was going to be all right and that he didn’t owe me any explanations. They put him in the same section where I was housed in ad seg. We were surrounded by gang members who, for different reasons, wanted us both dead.

Several months later he became my brother in Christ.

I do not condone snitching. Snitching is telling on someone else to get out of trouble, or for some other self serving reason. Snitching is wrong. To this day I still find it hard to understand why some people do what they do. But this isn’t about snitching or snitches. This is about compassion. (I know you know what compassion means, but look it up in a dictionary anyway.) This is about loving others as we are loved by God in Jesus Christ. This is about not conforming any longer to the pattern of this world. It’s about being transformed by the renewing of my mind. This is about the Power of God changing my attitude before the very eyes of my understanding.

Sometime later, after 11 ½ years, I was let out of seg to the general population. I ended up where I am now, the Ramsey 2 Unit. Here I met an older brother in Christ who was at the chapel every time I went there. He lived in the same housing area where I lived.

One time we were sitting in the day-room, waiting to go back to our cells. He asked me if I was sent here for college or for a trade. I told him I had just been released from seg and I didn’t know why I was here. He told me he was here for S.O.T. P. I asked him what that was. He said it was the Sexual Offender Treatment Program.

I had been looking around the day-room when he said that. I turned to look at him and he looked like he was reading some notes. I thought to myself, “This man is a child molester and I’m sitting right next to him.” Before I couldn’t stand even the thought of child molesters, let alone being in the same room with one. I thought if anybody deserved killing, they did. In prison, the only thing lower than a snitch is a child molester.

As I looked at him I realized there wasn’t any hatred in me towards this man. I went back to my cell. I thanked God for taking the hatred out of my heart. As I thought about it, I realized what it means to forgive, accept and love others as I have been forgiven, accepted and loved by God in Jesus.

I felt compassion for this man. Not for what he did, but for him as a person. Who else but God could do this? Do I condone sex offenders? Not hardly. Would I trust a sex offender around kids? NO! Would I trust Christians who had been sex offenders around kids? Yes, BUT for the kid’s protection and for their own protection, I would never leave them alone with kids.

Am I perfect in my life in Christ? Do I have it altogether? Not hardly. My body is getting older, slower and it is

# RIDDLES

dying as all flesh will someday. Yes, I still have many desires of the flesh. Some are easier to control than others. But I don't concentrate on controlling my flesh. Instead I focus on Christ living in me through the Holy Spirit, continually renewing my mind.

It is in our minds where the desires of the flesh begin. It is in our minds where they can be allowed to grow and turn into action, or where they can be stopped. Because God loves us unconditionally, He has given us a free will. The choice is ours to make.

**"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)**

*Juan R. Aguilar, Ramsey 2, Sept. 2001*

**EARN CIRCIFICATES!**

**MAILED**

**BIBLE STUDY  
COURSES**

**NOTHING TO JOIN**

**Proceed at your own pace.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

**P.O. Box 1181, Joshua, TX 76058**

- 1. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?**
- 2. What 8 letter word can have a letter taken away and it still makes a word. Take another letter away and it still makes a word. Keep on doing that until you have one letter left. What is the word?**
- 3. What kind of tree can you carry in your hand?**
- 4. Can you name three consecutive days without saying Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Sunday?**
- 5. What has a head and a tail, is brown but has no body?**
- 6. Paul's height is six feet, he's an assistant at a butcher's shop, and wears size 9 shoes. What does he weigh?**
- 7. If you have me, you want to share me. If you share me, you haven't got me. What am I?**
- 8. Forward I am heavy, but backward I am not. What am I?**
- 9. Spelled forward I'm what you do every day. Spelled backward, I'm what you hate. What am I?**

# JOHN 3:1-18 X-WORD PUZZLE

6

# Jesus Christ said...

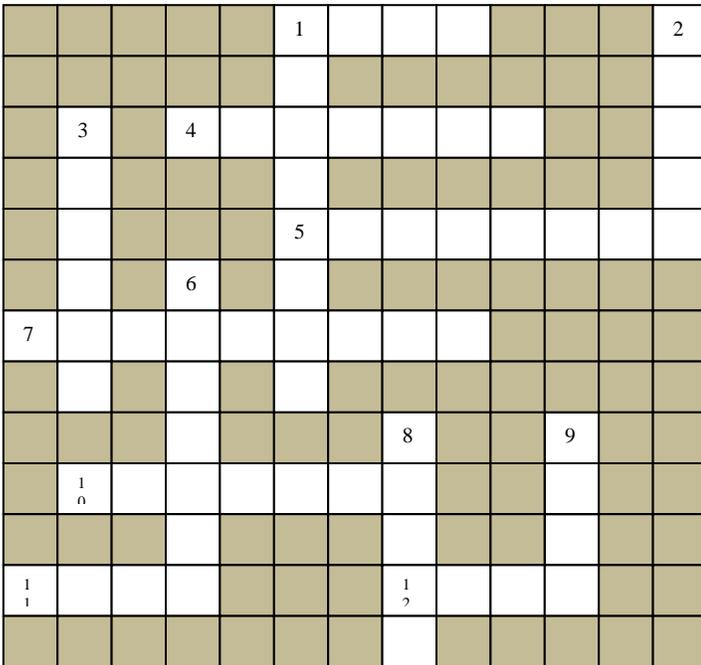
***"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)***

***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)***

***"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24)***

***"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:14)***

***"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)***



## ACROSS

1. You \_ \_ \_ \_ be born again to enter God's kingdom.
4. Moses lifted this up in the wilderness
5. Unbelievers are already this
7. Name of the man talking with Jesus
10. Heart felt belief in Christ causes this kind of life.
11. How to enter the kingdom of God
12. Jesus Christ DID come to earth to do this.

## DOWN

1. Evidence that Christ was a teacher come from God
2. God so loved this
3. Spiritual birth causes \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ children
6. Jesus Christ did NOT come to earth to do this.
8. Flesh birth causes \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ children
9. God \_ \_ \_ \_ His only Son to prove His love for al mankind.

**"For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'"**

(Romans 10:13)

# Renewing of a Mind

## PART 2

**“Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL ACT OF WORSHIP.”**

(Romans 12:1-2)

We know this, rather we SHOULD know this; just as we offered our bodies to the old way of life, from the abomination of adultery to the zeal over the Zodiac—and everything else contrary to sound doctrine—we should now offer our bodies to God.

Sometimes this is a very hard thing to do. Sometimes it seems the harder we try, the harder it is to do. What are we to do? Renew our minds!

**“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

(Romans 12: 2 NIV)

By the renewing of our minds! From God’s Word we KNOW that we are not to do the old things we used to do. Now we are to offer ourselves to God the Father with the same zeal we used to do the old things. We also know we are not to conform to the pattern of this world, that being, we are not to react to

7

situations and circumstances as we used to do; and the world still does.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Greek word which is translated “transformed” is the same word from which we get the word “metamorphosis.” The best example of metamorphosis is the caterpillar and the butterfly. When the time is right, the caterpillar weaves itself into a cocoon. When the time is right, a butterfly comes out. The caterpillar has now been transformed into a butterfly—a brand new creature.

Brothers and sisters, we are brand new creatures in Christ according to His Word in 2 Cor. 5:17. Spiritually we are perfect because Christ now lives in us. (Gal. 2:20). But we still have these same old bodies, controlled by these same old minds. Now we need to get our minds to match our spirits. The body follows the mind.

Know this always, God loves us unconditionally and because He does, He gave us a free will. One reason being that we may come to understand this love of His. So that we may be able to return this love back to Him because we want to, *not* because we have to. Any other kind of love is a love with conditions attached to it. If we love Him because we “have to” isn’t that a condition?

That is also what we are to do with the things we call sin. We are to stop doing those things because we want to, not because we have to. This is free will. This is unconditional love. And that’s where renewing of our minds comes in.

How do we renew our minds? Through reading, studying, praying and

meditating. By reading and studying God's Word, we come to know HIM. The Bible is the only collection of books ever written whose sole intent is for the reader to get to know the Author. Yes, the Bible was written by men, but it was God, the true Author, who inspired them to write.

The praying that renews the mind is communication between us and God. We take what we have read and studied to God and we talk with Him about what we have read and studied. As we learn to listen to Him, He begins to teach us through His Holy Spirit. This prayer then becomes meditation as we really think about what He is teaching us.

Jesus told us that He is the only way to the Father. When asked by His disciples to show them the Father, He told them that to see Him is to see the Father. To know Christ is to know God the Father.

The better—by that I mean “the more personally”—we come to know Christ, the better we come to know ourselves and others. By knowing who Christ Jesus really is—THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF THE FATHER—we come to know who we really are, because of WHO HE IS. We come to fully understand that we are children of God. We come to know our true identity.

Why is our identity so important? Because identity determines how we act! What is the most natural thing for a drug addict to do? **USE DRUGS!** What's the most natural thing for a gang member to do? Live the gang lifestyle! What's the most natural thing for a criminal to do? Commit crimes! What's the most natural thing for a homosexual

to do? Commit homosexuality! What's the most natural thing for an alcoholic to do? Get drunk! Get the picture?

So, what is the most natural thing for a child of God to do? **BE LIKE CHRIST**, totally dependent on, thus obedient to, God the Father. Once we truly begin to really understand we are children of God, we begin to BE who we are. Because we want to, not because we have to. Because that is who we are as “born again” Christians.

That is being transformed by the renewing of our minds. As long as we are in these bodies, this will be a continuous process. Don't just take my word for this. In fact, whenever you hear or read anybody talk about God's Word; don't take their word for it. Always check it out for yourself with God's Word. Check out the scriptures for yourself. Then take it to God the Father in prayer. If you have the desire to learn, He will teach you. (Philippians 3:15; 1 John 2:20 & 27).

*Juan R Aguilar, Ramsey 2 Unit,  
Rosharon, TX 775  
Sept., 2001*



1. Footsteps
2. The word is starting! starting, staring, string, sting, sing, sin, in, I. Cool, huh?
3. Palm
4. Yesterday, today and tomorrow
5. A coin 6. Meat
7. A secret
8. Forward I am ton, backwards I am not.
9. LIVE



*The only thing God wants from you is YOU!*

*A wise man speaks when he has something to say. A fool speaks because he has to say something.*

*Look at someone's real fruit and you will uncover their root.*

*When they discover the center of the universe, many people will not be happy because they are not it.*

*Ignoring God's truth does not make it disappear.*

*Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.*

*No God, no peace.  
Know God, Know peace!*

*The Bible will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible.*

*Nobody goes to hell because they are a sinner – but because they reject the solution to being a sinner.*

*Most certain fact...you will die!  
Most uncertain fact...when!*

*Jesus Christ may not be the most important thing in your life today...but He may be the only thing in your life tomorrow!*

## FEELINGS I

I have this awful feeling  
That I'm far from worthy of  
The miraculous forgiveness  
That's offered by God's love.  
I'm so dirty and unworthy  
Of the smallest of God's grace  
I just want to hide forever  
I can't bear to show my face.  
Yes, I'm aware of His forgiveness  
And the mercy that He gives,  
But I know I don't deserve it  
Just look at how I've lived.  
Then, my thoughts were  
interrupted  
By a new shame on my soul.  
My sins have all been taken  
Not just partly, but the whole.  
If any pay was due yet  
For the many things I've done,  
The Christ Who hung on Calvary  
Was not the Father's Son!  
For in my Bible clearly  
God declares His love for me.  
He poured His wrath completely  
on His Son nailed to that tree.  
If one speck is left unfinished  
In redeeming my poor soul  
Then God is made a liar  
He did part, but not the whole.  
Oh shame on me for doubting  
And assuming God had saved  
A portion of my penalty  
By me to yet be paid.  
When clearly Christ has suffered  
The perfect Son of God  
And paid the price completely  
Satisfying by His blood.  
No, I do not deserve it,  
The priceless sum He paid  
When all my degradation  
Upon God's Son was laid.  
But now I fully claim it,  
No more I look within.  
I turn my heart toward JESUS  
CHRIST

**HE CANCELLED  
ALL MY SIN!**

## X-WORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

10

					M	U	S	T					W
					I								O
	S		S	E	R	P	E	N	T				R
	P				A								L
	I				C	O	N	D	E	M	E	D	
	R		C		L								
N	I	C	O	D	E	M	U	S					
	T		N		S								
			D				F				G		
	E	T	E	R	N	A	L				A		
			M				E				V		
B	O	R	N				S	A	V	E			
							H						

# WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE FOR OUR SINS? COULD GOD NOT JUST HAVE SAID ***"I FORGIVE YOU."***

"But now

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**  
apart from the law is revealed,  
being witnessed by the Law and  
the Prophets, even

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD,  
THROUGH FAITH  
IN JESUS CHRIST,**

to all and on all who believe.

For there is no difference;  
for all have sinned and fall short  
of the glory of God,  
being justified freely by His grace  
through the redemption that is in  
Christ Jesus,

whom God set forth as a  
propitiation (the satisfying gift) by His  
blood, through faith,

**TO DEMONSTRATE HIS  
RIGHTEOUSNESS,**

because in His forbearance God had  
passed over the sins that were  
previously committed,

**TO DEMONSTRATE AT THE  
PRESENT TIME HIS  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT HE MIGHT  
BE JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER**

**of the one who has faith in Jesus."**

(Romans 3:21-16)



## FEELINGS II

I feel like I could 'ner deserve  
To be ever used of God.

I'm so lacking in the talents  
It would take to serve my Lord.  
I shrink beneath the many skills  
Of my fellows that I know.  
They are witty, smart and skillful  
All I am is dull and slow.

Then a voice no human ear  
can hear

Sounds clearly in my mind,

*"You need to reconsider  
How you came to be all Mine."*

*"It was not because of merit  
On your part that you are free,  
It was solely by My effort  
That you now belong to Me."*

*"My flesh was nailed upon  
the cross*

*It was Me who went to hell  
For your failings and your sins  
God's judgment on Me fell!"*

*"Now I've placed you in My body  
To serve as I decide*

*To believe you are not able  
Is a thought of human pride."*

*"If I wanted you more witty  
Or skills of other kind*

*I could place them in you easily  
I have access to your mind."*

*"What you have is what I've  
given you,*

*It's not your place to complain.*

*To not use all of your talents  
Is your failure and your shame."*

*"You'll be judged by that which  
you have*

*Not by what some others do.*

*I expect to get a full return  
From the talents I gave you."*

*"Stop wasting time in sorrow  
About that which you have not.*

*Instead find proper ways to use  
The talents that you've got."*

And as the voice is fading,  
My conscience now does sting.

I have no time to dawdle

**I'M HERE TO SERVE MY  
KING!**

11

# ***"Nobody Tells ME***

## ***What to Do!"***

***(Do you want to take your  
chances with these?)***



**JESUS CHRIST SAID:**

***"I am the way, the truth  
and the life. No one  
comes to the Father  
except through me."***

Page 9



**SHORT SHOTS**

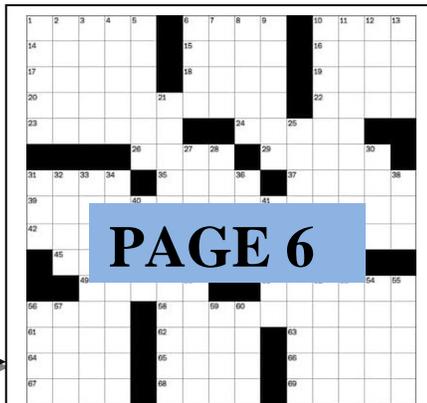
Page 11

***"Nobody Tells ME What to Do!"***

Page 10



**WHY DIDN'T GOD JUST SAY, "I FORGIVE YOU?"**



**PAGE 6**

***Okay God, here goes... FEELINGS I and II***  
 Pages 9 and 11

Page 5

**RIDDLES**

**EARN BIBLE STUDY Page 5 CERTIFICATES**

***Renewing of a Mind***  
 Pages 3 and 7

(Share this with a friend)

**Spring 2020**

# ***Prison Epistles***

**SEND YOUR TESTOMONY FOR JESUS CHRIST TO...**

Some Christians who are only and sufficiently a part of the church the Lord is building, of which all and only His children are members (Acts 2:47)  
**P.O. Box 1181**  
**Joshua, TX 76058**

Sent to inmates all over the state of Texas and beyond.  
 Also published on the Internet!

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "You **MUST** be born again."