

Monday 2/20/2012

A HOT SHOWER!

A REAL BLESSING TO BE THANKFUL ABOUT. IF I MANAGE TO GET A HOT SHOWER ONCE A WEEK, I COUNT THAT A GOOD WEEK.

UNLIKE THE MILITARY 80% OF THE MEN IN PRISON LOOK OUT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES. THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT ENCOURAGES THIS KIND OF SELFISHNESS. THEN AFTER 3, 5 OR 10 YEARS A MAN GOES HOME AND SOMEHOW WE BELIEVE HE WILL BE A LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN AND A MODEL TO HIS CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY.

THERE ARE WATER HEATERS FOR THE SHOWERS, BUT THEY ARE SO SMALL THAT ONLY THE FIRST 3 GUYS GET AN ACTUAL "HOT" SHOWER. NORMALLY THE 5-8 MEN WHO WORK IN THE HOUSE AS "PORTERS," OR TRUSTEES, OR WORKERS, GET DIBS ON THE SHOWERS IN THE MORNING PRIOR TO EVERYONE ELSE GETTING OUT AT 8 A.M.. AND THAT'S OKAY, IT'S A PERK OF THE JOB.

WHAT GETS ME IS THE PRIMA-DONNAS. A GUY WILL BURN UP ALL THE HOT WATER FOR HIS OWN 20-45 MINUTES. WHAT A WASTE... WHAT A SELFISH ATTITUDE. IT'S NOT WORTH FIGHTING OVER.

FOR ME PERSONALLY, I'M A GROWN MAN AND COULD CARE LESS IF THE WATER IS COLD. WHO DOESN'T ENJOY A HOT SHOWER! BUT IT'S NOT MORE IMPORTANT THAN STAYING CLEAN.

(2) I LOVE IT WHEN A GUY, I KNOW IS SELFISH, ASKS "HOW'S THE WATER?" AND I'LL RESPOND WITH SOMETHING LIKE, "IT'S ON THE COOL SIDE, BUT A GROWN MAN WOULDN'T MIND..."

I'D LIKE TO THINK I'M DOING MY PART TO HELP SOME OF THESE GUYS TO GROW UP.

I LIVE IN A "WORKERS" HOUSE SO DAY TO DAY LIFE IS BETTER THEN MORE THEN 50% OF THE PRISON.

IF YOUR NOT WORKING, OR GOING TO SCHOOL, OR PARTICIPATING IN THE DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM (ABOUT 200 MEN OUT OF 1800) THEN YOUR STUCK DEALING WITH A LOT OF BORED, MISGUIDED, REBELLIOUS MEN.

THE ILLINOIS SYSTEM IS SET UP WITH MORE STRICT LEVELS OF PRISONS, AS A WAY TO MAINTAIN CONTROL. IF YOU CAN'T GET ALONG HERE, OR OBEY RULES (LIKE A 40 YEAR OLD MAN WHO CAN'T TUCK HIS SHIRT INTO HIS PANTS, OR INSTIGATES FIGHTS JUST FOR ENTERTAINMENT, OR STEALS EVERYTHING HE CAN JUST BECAUSE), THEY SHIP YOU TO WORSE AND WORSE LOCATIONS. WHERE VIOLENCE IS THE NORM (GLADIATOR SCHOOLS WE CALL THEM), A SHOWER ONCE A WEEK IN A LOCKED CAGE, WHERE YOU HAVE TO PRESS A BUTTON EVERY 30 SECONDS TO GET "COLD" WATER ONLY.

ONE THING I'VE SEEN FIRST HAND IN PRISON THAT I DIDN'T SEE OFTEN IN THE WORLD... IS THE AMAZING CHANGES AND POWER OF GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE. WHEN YOU LOSE

③ ~~LOSE~~ ANY CONTROL OF YOUR DAY TO DAY LIFE, EVERYONE YOU CALLED FRIENDS, FAMILY OR CHURCH FAMILY DISAPPEAR LIKE YOU'VE BECOME A ZOMBIE ON THE WALKING DEAD AND YOUR FUTURE DATING PROSPECT JUST CLIMBED ON BOARD THE TITANIC.

YET IN THE MIDST OF THIS MESS A MAN WHO TRULY DESIRES TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER COMES TO LEARN FORGIVENESS, HOPE AND MERCY. IN PRISON YOU CAN'T FAKE YOUR FAITH FOR VERY LONG. EACH DAY YOUR ATTACKED, RIDICULED OR TEMPTED AND WILL-POWER GET'S YOU ONLY SO FAR. TRUE PEACE AND JOY ONLY COMES SUPERNATURALLY.

TRYING TO IDENTIFY AND HEAL MY OWN BROKENNESS IS PROVING TO BE A CHALLENGE. I'M GRATEFUL TO SO MANY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO HAVE WALKED WITH ME IN THIS MESS. EACH LETTER, AND STORY SHARED, AND GIFT IS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO HAVE HOPE AND BELIEVE THERE IS A PROMISING FUTURE. THERE IS 'LITTLE TO NONE' REAL HELP FOR "HEALING" TO BE FOUND IN PRISON. IN THE WORLD YOU CAN FIND RESOLUTION IN A FEW WEEKS OR MONTHS BY MEETING A THERAPIST OR DOCTOR, ATTENDING A SELF-HELP SEMINAR OR A.A./N.A. TYPE GROUP. IN PRISON YOU MIGHT GET ONE NUGGETS OF USEFUL HELP IN 6-9 MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS EFFORT. THE ENVIRONMENT IS DESIGNED TO DO NOTHING, AND ONLY PLAY CARDS AND WORK OUT. SUCH A WASTE OF HUMAN POTENTIAL.

(4) I'M TRYING HARD NOT TO BE NEGATIVE, BUT TO BE GREATFUL AND THANKFUL FOR THE SMALL, DAILY BLESSINGS. A BITTER, NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ONLY LEADS TO MORE ANGER, HATRED AND VIOLENCE. THERE'S PLENTY OF THAT IN HERE ALREADY.

FOR MORE THEN 10 YEARS I TRIED SO HARD TO BREAK AWAY FROM A VIOLENT LIFE OF THE MILITARY.

I KNOW A COUPLE OF GUYS WHO WORK IN THE "INDUSTRY" AREA. THEY BUILD AND REPAIR WOOD FURNITURE. IT'S ONE OF THE BEST JOBS TO HAVE IN THE CAMP AND SO THERE ARE ALWAYS "HATERS" WHO GIVE THOSE GUYS GRIEF. JUST JEALOUSY REALLY, AND THAT OFTEN LEADS TO VICIOUS RUMORS WHICH SPREAD FAST IN THIS SOAP OPERA. SO FOR FUN I STARTED TO ASK THEM, "HOW IS THE WORK GOING ON THOSE SQUIRREL ELEVATORS?" I ALWAYS SAY IT IN A PUBLIC PLACE LIKE THE CHOW HALL OR LIBRARY. NOW I'M JUST WAITING TO SEE HOW LONG IT TAKES TO WORK IT'S WAY THROUGH THE RUMOR MILL AND GET BACK TO THE INDUSTRY AREA. I HOPE IT GIVES THEM SOMETHING TO LAUGH ABOUT.

I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT THE MAGAZINES, BUT THANK YOU SO MUCH. I SHARE THEM WITH A LOT OF MEN AND GIVE THEM TO OUR LIBRARY. IT'S A REAL BLESSING, THANKS AGAIN. (POPULAR SCIENCE, SPIN, MEN'S HEALTH, MEN'S FITNESS, FURBES, WORLD, NAT. GEO., READER'S DIGEST)

David