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Hello World!

Let me share a story about Jeffrey (not his real name... it's actually Grant) and his good neighbor. About 6-months ago Jeff was living in the same Housing Unit as me. We were able to talk on a daily basis and I learned about two very different men. On the outside I could easily see that this man is, or was, one of the old gang chiefs. Covered in tattoos and scars that reflect a life of violence. Eyes dark, cold, hollow and piercing that have seen killing, but are also tired of all the painful memories.

The other man though is forgiven and free. We only spoke during brief moments when Jeff wasn't looking over his shoulder, or being occupied by the many, younger gang types that admired Jeff's reputation of the man he used to be. He had to survive so needed to be vigilant and periodically forced to remind people he was still dangerous and not to be tested.

Jeff changed his ways. For almost a year he was now a Christ follower. This new life of peace, forgiveness and true freedom made all the pressure and stress worth dealing with. The one thing that hurt Jeff now was that his wife wouldn't talk to ~~her~~. No visits, no letters and no phone calls. For 35-years when Jeff "was evil" (his words) his wife stuck by him in and out of jail. She supplied money whenever he demanded and even smuggled drugs into the prison for him. In his own words he abused her and disrespected her. So why couldn't she see these changes in him and know how much he really loves her.

I was happy to see he wasn't broken or swayed from his conviction. Turning away from the support and comforts he earned and could expect as a gang chief. His friends, and protector and servants having left him to fend for himself. And even his wife turning away couldn't break his resolve. Now he works in one of the prison jobs! For a gang chief this is such a humbling (humiliating) and difficult step. To set aside your pride and reputation. To ignore the looks given by those who once feared you or admired your criminal position and power.

I started seeing Jeff at church and Bible studies more and more.

About 4-months have passed and I only see Jeff in passing when going to work, We usually only have time to smile and wave. Recently I was returning from medical walking alone. From the other direction Jeff was walking toward me, also alone. On these rare moments when two people reach within 50 yards of each other they can slow down enough to still be moving, but can share a brief 90-second conversation without causing suspicion from the guards watching at a distance.

As we nearly reached the point where we could no longer hear each other, since our backs were to each other and were walking further apart, I ended by saying "Keep prayin' Jeff! Remember, God can do anything." Jeff then says, "Don't I know it! My wifes been writing and accepting my phone calls for a month now!"

My heart filled with joy at this encouraging news.

∴ Prayer is powerful...

Wm D. Cady