

Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry Newsletter

JULY 2009

NEWS

- Visit our website at to give online, sign up for the electronic version of the newsletter and submit prayer requests.
- RTJ is looking for someone to be editor of our newsletter. Please call Brenda at 217-677-2356 for more information.

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Be a blessing.....receive a blessing.

P. 4 SCHEDULES

Find our contact information and schedules of both the prison Bible studies and services and where Jim is speaking next.

Dear Ministry Partner,

I have asked Steve Wright, one of the regional directors of RTJ to do the article this month. We have had several inquiries about our sermons, what they consist of and where God is leading us. Many of our sermons have been preached by other Pastors before and some after we have ministered them. It is really great to get this type of confirmation that we are all on the same page. - Jim

Casualties of War

July is a month when we stop to think of the conflicts that this nation has come through and the many people who have given their lives to defend life, liberty, and happiness. We call them "casualties of war."

There are casualties of a spiritual war too. This is a war that we don't see. I'm talking about the spiritual battle that everyone fights.

There are many types of casualties. Since I'm a guard in the prison system I see the men who get out and fall back into their old ways. But, there are also casualties outside of the prison walls, in the churches: preachers, teachers, prophets, healers, your Pastor, your neighbor.

One reason for some of these could be that we don't esteem others above ourselves. When we pray we are so focused on our own needs we miss when there is a need around us. James 4:1-3 says, "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and do not obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss that you may spend it on YOUR pleasures."

I have talked to so many men over the years and the one constant is they

are focused on "I". When we can start to get the "I" out of us then the Holy Spirit can begin to reform our minds and conform our hearts to be the likeness of Christ.

Discouragement causes casualties in this spiritual war. I recall a sermon I heard years ago and I see this at work in some of the professing believers today. It is simply this, "Christians are the only ones who kill their own wounded." We need to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are discouraged.

Sometimes discouragement comes because we have too many activities going at once and fatigue sets in.

We can also have people falling and becoming the casualties on the battlefield due to ministering before they are prepared. The first century church didn't send anyone out until they were prepared. This came by revelation from the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes, because God puts a call on our lives but we don't wait on the Lord. Even Jesus did nothing outside of what the Father said. Many Christians make themselves targets by running ahead and not listening to the people that God placed around them and over them.

Having said all this, we need to become the battle ready unit God wants us to be. We need to reach out to the

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Q&A

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED IN RTJ PRISON MINISTRY

How do I become qualified to go into the prisons?

There are two kinds of volunteers that go into the prisons. The first is a **limited** volunteer. This person must fill out an RTJ application and their name will be submitted to the volunteer coordinator of the prison where you will minister. Most people will choose to volunteer at the prison closest to them. A background check will be conducted before approval is granted. A limited volunteer is only allowed in once a quarter.

The second type of volunteer is a **regular** volunteer. This person not only fills out an RTJ application but will have to fill out an application with the prison. They will be fingerprinted, a background check will be made, TB test administered, and will go through an orientation meeting. They will have a state ID tag with their picture on it which will remain at the prison. They will be allowed in as often as they are willing for Bible studies and church services. They are also able to minister in other prisons.

What kinds of volunteers does RTJ need?

All kinds. If you do not feel called to go into the prisons we need administrative help too. Currently we need a newsletter editor, more volunteers to go into the prisons for Bible studies, musicians to do praise and worship for our services, volunteers to help with mailings. If you don't teach you could still go in for a service or Bible study just to pray with the inmates. If your expertise is web design we have a web site that needs maintenance. There are many things we would like to do such as a yearly banquet and volunteer appreciation dinners. We just need volunteers to coordinate such events. We need prayer warriors as well, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Of course, there is a need for financial help too. If you are not sure if you will fit in, please call our office and talk with Jim about using your talents and giftings. There is a place for YOU with RTJ prison ministry.

What kind of curriculum is used?

Study books and curriculum is provided by RTJ. We use Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* and many books by John & Lisa Bevere. Some of these have DVD's that we show and then facilitate discussion after viewing the videos. For those who are

able to preach, you may preach at a service on a subject God lays on your heart.

Could I be attacked by prisoners while ministering?

That is not likely to happen as there are always guards in attendance and usually the Chaplain is there too. You will not be alone with a group of prisoners at any time. Those who take the trouble to come to the service or Bible study often have already confessed Christ as their Savior and are there to worship God.

There are so many people in prison. Can we really make a difference?

YES! RTJ doesn't just preach, we mentor and disciple incarcerated Christians. God's word never returns void. We will only know the extent of what we have done when we reach eternity.

I'd like to be involved. Where do I begin?

Please call the RTJ office at 217-728-8775, email Jim at rtjprisonministry@yahoo.com, or fill out the form on page 3 and send it in.



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casualties, to listen to the General (Pastor or ministry head) of our fighting unit (church or ministry body). I feel that Satan has taken enough from those who believe. We need to fight the good fight and when we have done all, we need to just stand in faith.

Blessings in Christ,
Steve Wright

Letters:

I am a resident at Taylorville Correctional Center and RTJ ministries has been a blessing to me as they are faithful in their ministering to us here on Monday and Thursday nights. The John Bever programs and *Purpose Driven Life* studies are empowering for those of us living here. All the volunteers are loving individuals with a deep concern for us. I believe they are one of the best tools IDOC has to combat recidivism.

Mother's Day at Graham CC

Eight men stood before everyone in the room to accept Jesus Christ into their lives and to get right with the Lord and begin getting right with their mothers on this Mother's Day. We prayed with them and welcomed them into our family. I charged all men in attendance to recognize these new believers and give them all support, encouragement, and fellowship when recognized around Graham Correctional Center. - Andy Ritchie

Taylorville CC

Blessings to all. Our new *Purpose Driven Life* class has begun

and for the first session Jim Helton accompanied me. He shared some of his testimony and gave a short sermon on obedience. Then he turned the class over to me. I tell you it was an awesome night with the men sharing and ministering to each other as well as to Jim and I. I always leave that place better than when I went in because the men are so thankful just to have the opportunity to have worship and fellowship time. If you want to meet some prayer warriors then you need to visit those who are in jail. - Skip Renfro

Decatur CC

Greetings to all! This month (May), I was compelled to speak on Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approach". (NIV)

The key words were, "let us encourage one another". The women were attentive and taking notes as I preached on how they are surrounded by the enemy and it is their responsibility to be there for each other, encouraging each other, that we do see 'That Day'

approaching, When the altar was opened to pray for any of their needs, I believe everyone came forward and stood in line to receive prayer. As each one was prayed for, she exclaimed that the very words of scripture in the sermon were what they had been studying in a Bible study. The women felt that God had confirmed the message of encouragement and now they were to be there and encourage each other. Praise God for He knows our every need. - Mary Purcell

Purpose Driven Life

We will begin teaching Purpose Driven Life at Decatur DOC this month. The girls are looking forward to this. We anticipate a lot of participation. The women share how they see themselves in each chapter. A special *thank you* to all our supporters that have donated money for our books! The girls get to keep the books and study them and give them to new girls coming in.

Kim Shealey
Director Decatur DOC

PLEASE CUT ALONG LINE AND MAIL TO RTJ

AREAS OF INTEREST:

- JAIL/PRISON OUTREACH
- ADD TO MAILING LIST
- OFFICE VOLUNTEER
- OTHER _____

LOVE OFFERING:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE & ZIP _____

PRAYER REQUESTS

Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry
PO Box 103
Sullivan, IL 61951-1348
Office: 217.728.8775
Mobile: 217.855.7799
Email: rtjprisonministry@yahoo.com
Web: www.releasethroughjesus.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Decatur, IL
Permit No. 300

Return Service Requested

Speaking Engagements

7/5/09 Special Healing Service - Vandalia CC
7/12/09 Sherman 1st Church of the Nazarene
7/19/09 Auburn Nazarene

8/9/09 Pana Christian Church
8/16/09 Cerro Gordo Church of the Brethren

9/27/09 Watseka Assembly of God

10/4/09 Vandalia Nazarene
10/11/09 Fairview Heights-Parkview

11/1/09 Windsor Methodist Church

RTJ - Taking Prisoners for Christ!

Release Through Jesus Prison Ministry enters all levels of confinement facilities to help men and women to know Jesus and lead them to salvation, to teach the men and women to hide the Word of God in their hearts so that they might sin no more, and to regularly visit churches of all Christian denominations to spread the good news of God's work with the incarcerated.



"... I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME UNTO ME." MATTHEW 25:36

PRISON SERVICES

1st Sunday
Vandalia
Taylorville

2nd Saturday
Big Muddy

2nd Sunday
Graham

3rd Sunday
Taylorville

4th Sunday
Decatur
Taylorville

Friday evenings * NEW!
Big Muddy

PRISON BIBLE STUDIES

Monday
Decatur
Taylorville

Thursday
Centralia
Taylorville

Saturday
Decatur Work Release

Quarterly
Lincoln
Centralia

www.releasethroughjesus.org