

“Letter From M.O.M.”

The **Monthly** newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

WWW.MovingOnMinistry.COM

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

Volume 18 – Nov. 2006 - **3rd Anniversary Issue**

“I Can Only Imagine”

It is hard to imagine that this ministry has been developing for nearly five years. New facilities have opened up to us, we are going to **monthly newsletter**, as well as getting correspondence from many states and foreign countries.

Watch our websites

www.MovingOnMinistry.com

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

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Intentions & Wishes

The intentions of this newsletter are to allow an understanding of jail & prison ministries. It is our intentions to get input from those incarcerated as well as those “free” to visit. Life experiences of the faith and fellowship from those locked up in the facilities are always desired to let others know of the value of “visitation”. I am certain that each of us have many stories of the miracles God has done in our lives.

Our wishes are that we would have a list of supportive churches that individuals might look forward to attending once released.

A list of services, such as housing, employment, and counseling services, as well as some individuals available for friendly fellowship are also much needed items.

God’s Word says if a man stumbles, how can he continue lest there be another to help him up. **Ecc. 4:10** **“For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.”** **Proverbs 24:17** **“Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth:”** **John 11:10** **“But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”**

Please help us with input for this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles or input.

Fellowship

We would like to keep a listing of locations for fellowship that welcomes previous incarcerated individuals. We previously listed 51 churches that are supportive. We would like follow up on these churches to see if they are supportive, as well as letting us know of others available. **We also cherish letters from inmates or relatives to the churches to let us know how we are doing**

If you would like a church added, or have concern on one that is not supportive, please contact us.

Volume 19 issue will include 8 pages of addresses of resources for inmates.

**“I don’t count the days –
I make my days count;”**
AM

**“I am not serving time –
I am serving the Lord.”**
AM

Time is a present and I don’t intend to waste it any longer!
AM

Letters that Express it All

These are actual quotes from some of the different incarcerated individuals. The names have been removed. Our first newsletter went out October 2003 (3 years ago). These are many of the letters recently received. If one of these letters is yours, let us know how you are doing now. We always invite letters of testimony or success from inmates, relatives, and friends.

None are to be Overlooked

Chaplain Bob;

I just got a "Bible." It's the first time I've opened one in years. At this time I'm reading Matthew and I find it very eye-opening at times. You know I really didn't ever think this was for me and no one pushed me into this.

While I was at BWDF, I never talked to any of the chaplains that used to come into the unit. But on that day I just had something to say for some reason and when you gave me your card, it just made me stop and think for a while and it just seems that all bad things started to happen to me when I stopped going to church with my family. At this time I don't have any more family. But with God's help, I can establish me one again. . . . From some of the letters, I can tell you have "charisma" and "integrity." Sir, you have helped me very much. I only have 8 more months to go. I hope to be able to meet you again. I will be going to an after care in XXXXXX in April. I hope to hear from you again.

AB

Seeing the Difference, Such an Example

I am writing in return response to the letter, volume 17 newsletter, pictures, and copy of "Dream Seeker" letter you sent me.

First off I want to thank you very much, it really touched my heart and made me feel quite special, which is something that doesn't happen all that often in this place I've called home for sometime now. Not many people would have taken the time to fulfill such a request from someone.

And that brings me to my next subject, **NW**. She is such a big part of my life, we have grown to be lifelong friends, regardless of all our negative surroundings. She is such a beautiful person inside and out. She is a very big reason for me getting on the right track for the last 2 months here. She has such a strong testimony in God and her recovery (**NOTE: NW gave her life fully to the Lord on Dec. 12, 2006**). And it seems to radiate to everyone around her that has an open heart and mind. She did a very good job at expressing that in her letter "**Dream Seeker**." You can truly see her ambition to be free, clean, and sober, her love for God, and her love for our beautiful world outside.

I thank God everyday for **NW** and our friendship and the joy and spirit of the Lord she brings to me. I can understand the relationship you yourself have built with her over the year, and only hope ours is a lasting one too.

MR

NOTE: We have seen the development of this Proverbs 31 woman developing.

Great Inspiration and Motivation

Although I've only spoken with you two times, you have gave me great inspiration and motivation with my fight against failure. I really was in a stage of confusion and had many questions on how to really serve our Lord, but in one attempt by you, "Mr. Chaplain Bob," you made that attempt successful.

I now have only a little confusion (which will be answered later) and my questions you answered precisely. It's amazing how one individual sent from our God to come to enlighten me, can succeed so greatly. I've spoken to many chaplains, only you have been able to fill me in on the information I most needed. Thank you.

Chaplain Bob, I am only 19 years old and have spent most of my last seven years coming in-and-out of juvenile hals and this Tulare County Jail. My life has always been a struggle with success and getting out of failure. I will be honest, at those times, I did not yet accept Christ. **I Now Have!!** I have always wondered when my life was going to change (till now).

About March 17, 2006, I decided to take initiative and surrender my life over to God. I finally realize I could not live this life as a troubled out-cast anymore.

Don't get me wrong, I still need an extensive amount of work as a Christian, but you Chaplain Bob, I know can help. By only that one visit with you last night, here in BWDF, you've given me the most determination to want to receive as much knowledge as I can accept in the Word of God. Please continue to help me, because I really need it.

I have only 30 days left (released at the time of this publishing) and I am

scared to experience the outside again. I know with my life turned around, and by giving my life over to God, I will succeed. By your support, my family, and the Lord, I am destined to make it.

Again Mr. Chaplain Bob, I thank you so much and pray that with your help in here and out of here, I will accomplish all my goals. Most of all, accomplish my goal of changing my life, and succeed in my walk with Christ.

AC

NOTE From Bob: None of the credit goes to Bob, other than doing what God called him to do. Much as the donkey (Numbers 22:21-33) was used to express God's Word, Bob looks as himself the same way. As a tool is only good in the Master's hand, Bob wishes to be used by the Master.

Doing Time is NOT JUST Doing Time

Chaplain Bob –Yes!! I have done so many (Bible Studies) these past 4 years. Right now I am doing 4: American Bible Academy, Salvation Army, Crossroads Bible Institute Graduate courses, and Rock of the Ages Prison Ministry. I am also enrolled at Channel Island Bible College & Seminary. I just finished my first semester I took 3 classes by correspondence: Bible doctrine 101, 102 & Introduction to Greek!

I am also asking permission to take the theory part of organic chemistry via mail from Pacific Union College. . . . I just need organic Chemistry, the lecture part, to complete my B.S. in Biology!

And I put my name on the list for those waiting to take classes from coastline community college through the prison. I also have a "letter writing

ministry.” Last month of July, I wrote 97 letters – God is blessing this ministry.

I keep busy. “I don’t count the days – I make my days count;” “I am not serving time – I am serving the Lord.” Time is a present and I don’t intend to waste it any longer!! To all those brothers/inmates out there, get rid of the TV and radio and get busy with your fathers business.

I don’t take naps either. At 53 years of age, I have slept 1/3 of my life, almost 18 years, and watched countless hours of TV the past 40 years. What a waste of God’s time.

We prisoners have one of the greatest resources – time. In the world. - it means “earthly treasures.” In prison – it means “Heavenly treasures.” And wherever your treasure is, there is your heart. Brother Bob and Sister Linda, I am being blessed immensely and God has enlarged my territory! Wonderful things are taking place in my life. Next letter I’ll share more with you! God willing!!

Brother AM

Greetings in Jesus Christ
My name is Charles Hutchinson and I bring you greetings from the body of Christ here at Pleasant Valley State prison. Inside electric fences, myself and other prisoners share our testimonies of Christ’s work in us with you. We are merely representatives of the hundreds of prisoners in which Jesus Christ is doing a work of grace and raising up an army of men as jewels from the devil’s junk pile! We are behind prison walls. Read about all the things God is doing through His transforming love and power in Jesus Christ, and through Moving On Ministry, and its founder Chaplain Bob. This ministry has a genuine love for prisoners, men society

outcast, but God is raising up to bring him glory.

Chaplain Bob has given us a voice and we are asking God’s ambassadors in all the prisons to support Moving On Ministry. As we share our stories, it helps others tear down Satan’s strongholds. Request your copy today, or maybe for a friend. Remember that the body of Christ is one body, one church, serving one Lord!

Write Chaplain Bob today and may the Lord Jesus Christ always be magnified.

Brother Charles Hutchinson

I hope when this letter reaches you, it finds you doing God’s will and spreading His Word daily.

Well today I have some good news. A Christian Brother, Steve (director of Church Behind the Wall) wrote me a letter, and I really felt good, because I have been praying to have someone to share God’s Word with, and you made it happen. I want to thank you, and Moving On Ministry.

I am starting a new Bible study, and guess what it starts with, the Gospel of John. I have read it before, but it still seems to bring me closer to Christ Jesus. I know I have a lot of growing to do, and I am enjoying it daily. I still have a little trouble with my prayers because I want to learn to talk to God the way I used to. I’m praying for fellowship with Him, and I know it will happen, because God is good all the time.

I want to let you and your wife, and the Moving On Ministry crew know that you all do make a difference in our lives here. Thank you for caring, and may God continue to bless you all with His love and mercy daily.

KS – San Diego

Needs after Release

Individuals being released from incarceration have the same common needs of all individuals. There is a need of self-respect and self esteem. Many have a need of housing. Most are coming back looking for employment. Some are facing classes for AA, NA, or Domestic Violence. Some need to enroll in educational or vocational programs. Most would appreciate someone to just talk to or have a mentor. Fellowship with the right people is ALWAYS needed. For many these are totally new expectations and experiences.

One inmate expressed wonderfully the problem of being released. He stated that everything is slow to happen while incarcerated. It seems like an eternity as you wait for your next transfer or assignment. You feel like you are running at 5 miles per hour. Then, when released to the world, you are put into an environment that is running at 200 miles per hour. This drastic change of environments tends to overcome individuals and they have a hard time adapting. We hear of transitions from one area to another in each of our lives. Someone to just talk with about the feelings and changes the individuals are going thru is a great healer. The Bible says that each of us should be a "brother" to help the other one up when he falls. Other scripture talks about "sticking closer than a brother" we can often help with sharing life experiences or just listening to someone in need. We don't always have to solve the problems, but many times need to just "lend an ear" so that someone might share their needs or hurts with us. Many men have heard from their wives "I don't want you to fix it, just listen". We need to just listen.

Sharing Your Testimony

There are 4 parts to an individual's testimony;

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus
2. How I realized I needed Jesus
3. How I committed my life to Jesus
4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.

But in reality, those who believe in Jesus have the testimony of God in them; Each of us needs to periodically share our testimony with others. The importance is not what you have done, but what God is doing.

1. Your testimony;
2. Your life lessons
3. Your godly passions
4. the Good News

God will make all things new
What are some things I should finish once I start?

**"For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."
Hebrews 3:14**

New life in Christ. We must maintain the confident faith we had when we first believed.

Scripture is from the New Living Translation (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

Our testimony is to give hope to others; our fruit is to give proof to God.

Repentance means you change your mind so deeply that it changes you. It's not just that I changed how I thought—I am now changed.

Testimonies

We always encourage the testimonies from those behind the bars. People ask “when do you have a testimony?” The answer is, “the moment you accept Christ as Savior, you have a testimony.”

Evidence in the Concern

You and your blessing of a wife blessed me and the other men most recently by coming to witness to us for our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. After church when y’all were here I came up to you and told you thanks for coming, and asked you for one of your cards that you were handing out. Any how, I pretty much just put it in my locker and thought about writing you a few times, but never got around to it. Then yesterday a brother in Christ, who happens to be a lifer, came up to me and told me I should write you in regards to a hope, and concern of mine. I truly felt that tug in my heart from the Spirit telling me that it was the right thing to do. So all day I’ve been thinking to myself “what should I say to these people who I don’t know and how to talk to them in regards to my concerns that I’m faced with. So I’ll do my best to convey that which is troubling me, as well as faced with. I’m originally from Texas. I got out of prison in ’98 and ran to California. It’s my second time in prison in California. This time our Lord and Savior called me to repentance, “literally.” I over-dosed on heroin and when I came 24 hours later, I heard the Spirit say to me, “I saved you.” All at once I felt very scared and dirty. I repented, and repented, and repented my heart out as the many thoughts resurfaced and convicted me of my sins. **The Lord Jesus is awesome.** The veil

has been torn and now I’ve been bought by God’s grace. Amen

Anyhow, the narrow path continues to roll on ahead of me. Since I’ve been in California, I’ve resided in Humboldt County, Arcata. (NOTE: Chaplain Bob accepted Christ as Savior while living in Humboldt County, Eureka). I was a hippy pot grower up there, into the Grateful Dead, and Bob Marley, that sorta thing. In a reality, just part of the preverbal tribe, the “Lost Tribe” if you will. And now me and God have been reunited at long last, though I still need direction from my elders whom are part of the body of Christ which is why I’ve chosen to write you. I have several issues that I need help with. I need someone to minister to my brother who is in jail in Colorado, first and foremost. They’re trying to give him the death penalty there. It’s killing me inside sir, cause they won’t let us write each other. I was talking to him about the Lord. He needs the Lord, but he is faced with a great deal of stress right now I’m quite sure. Please pastor Bob, pray the Lord Christ Jesus to put His Words of gentleness, truth, and grace into your mouth, to cleanse my brother’s lonely heart, I pray the Father in Christ Jesus’ name.

I just need good advice, direction, and family that love the Lord as much as I do, to witness Christ in my life. . . . Since I’m still rough around the edges, but I’m still growing in the grace. And unless God’s a liar, and we know He is not, His covenant still stands when He said, I will perfect my work in you. I stand by that. I believe He is faithful and true if you knew me before, and witnessed the change yourself in me, . . . you would see the complete difference in me.

GR

Testimonies (con't)

Spirit Filled Walk

I would like to give honor to God, chaplain Bob, and all the staff and readers of **Moving On Ministry** for the opportunity to share what God is doing and showing me. My name is **Brother Charles**. I've been in prison now for 12 years. I have a reputation for being an optimist. Oh, I have my moments like everyone else when I am tempted and discouraged. Just ask some of the brother here in Pleasant Valley Prison on "C" yard, but one of the greatest lessons I have learned through the years in prison, is to give praise to my Lord and Savior in all things, in trials, as well as the triumphs.

I do have my fair share of trials. Frankly, the flesh part of me would get discouraged – sometimes upset – in the face of adversity. Without Christ on the throne of my life, my outlook and demeanor would be anything but cheerful. But I have discovered that the more I praise my Heavenly Father, meditate on His Word, walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and talk with others about Jesus, the less my natural side comes through. The Holy Spirit overrules my natural tendencies and fills me with optimism, joy, and peace.

As I confessed to the readers in the opening of this message, I don't respond this way every time = my sinful nature can still cause trouble. But as I have grown in the Lord, and allowed Him to guide me through His Spirit, His supernatural joy and peace have become more and more a part of me. I don't have to struggle to be joyful and calm in my own strength; the Spirit of God pours out an ample supply of optimism from within so that generally my first reaction

to adversity is one of genuine joy and peace. Joy is just one of the divine pleasures of the Spirit-directed walk, for us to keep Christ on the throne, we reap the benefits of the omnipotent, caring God, who is at work conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 5:22-23, the apostle Paul lists nine specific benefits that grow within when we are filled with the spirit. He calls them Fruit of the Spirit, meaning that they are beneficial growth of our intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ. As we walk in Him, and grow in Him, He produces these qualities within us – love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The Fruit of the Spirit is not only beneficial of the Spirit-filled life, it is the pleasure of the Spirit-filled life as well. It brings pleasure to you, to others, and especially to God – when you genuinely love Him and your fellow man. It brings pleasure to you, and to others, and to God. When joy radiates from your countenance, God pours His pleasurable attributes within us so that they might flow out our attributes and actions.

Realistically, because we are still human, we do not become experts in these nine pleasures right away. Like any fruit on a tree, they take time and are subject to the inner conditions of the plant itself. In a drought or carnality, the fruit can shrivel on our branches, but in the moist verdant spiritual state, the fruit will grow and prosper.

God Bless you all

Brother Charles Hutchinson

NOTE from Bob: God is working in Charles life. He started **Strong Tower Ministry** in another prison, and has moved it on to Coalinga. He will be adding more stories to **M.O.M.**

CONQUERING COMPROMISE Daniel 1:1-21

I had read an article written by Lane Palmer. The following message is an extension of that article and one I shared at Corcoran State Prison in California on Sunday, July 23, 2006, during four chapel services the wife and I conducted.

Many of you have heard my wife, Linda, give her testimony. Some of you may have read a part of it in **volume 15 of Letter From M.O.M.** Linda talked about compromise and the consequences. She lost her 19 year old son to drunk driving - consequences. But yet she perseveres through the hard times just like the good times.

Those that have heard, or read, my testimony, know that I was living what I considered a "safe" life, but I would have been headed to hell – consequences. I ended up in some ungodly situations with women I had met – consequences. I did not make as strong of spiritual stand with my family as I should have – consequences. I gave into lust – consequences. Then as I let Christ take over more of my life (even today I am still doing the letting go and letting Christ) I saw the better results in my life, my children's life, and grand-children's life – consequences. (See the article titled "**My Heart, Christ's Home**" in **volume 12 of Letter From M.O.M.**)

My own brother was found dead with two fresh tracks from heroin – consequences.

Intro: In the early part of this century, an American ship was wrecked off the Sicily Isles near the coast of England. The sea had been calm and the weather clear, but the vessel was caught in a treacherous current that slowly lured it off its course. Before the captain and the crew realized what had happened, the ship had crashed into the rocks.

In life, too, powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and carry it to shipwreck. Spiritual drifting is usually a slow and imperceptible process. We know it has occurred when we have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth that we once knew.

Compromise is defined as

1. a settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting or opposing claims, principles, etc., by reciprocal modification of demands.
2. the result of such a settlement.
3. something intermediate between different things

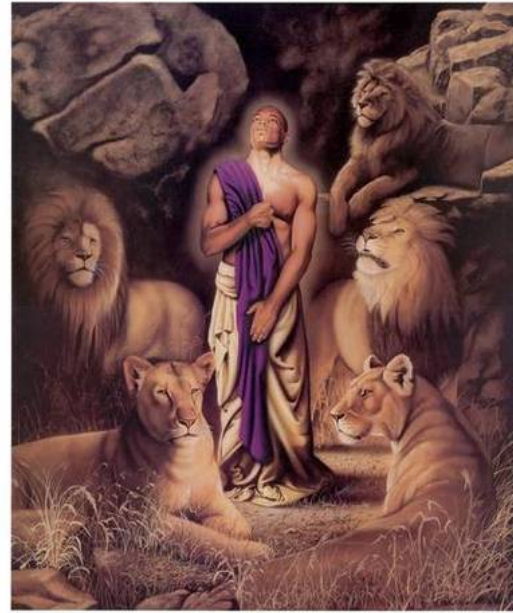
Often, life is filled with compromises. We are given a choice as to how we will live our lives and what path we are going to follow through life. When we come to these times of decision, it is imperative that we make godly choices. Because the choices we make at the cross roads of life will determine our usefulness to God and our effectiveness in His

kingdom work. We look at the effectiveness of the fruit in our life through our children, our friends, etc. Who do we hook up with?



Three Men Invited to a Bar-B-Q

Our text today is about four men who came to a time of decision in their lives. They could either compromise and go with the flow, or they could stand their ground and live for the Lord. The circumstances they faced and the decisions they made set the course for the rest of their lives. Since this incident occurred, the names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have stood tall as the names of great heroes of the faith. These three men were not only invited to the “Bar-B-Q” but were to be the Bar-B-Q (which was cranked up 7 times as hot). As the story went, they could not get them cooked above “rare.”



A Man and His Cats

And, what of Daniel? Who would have ever have heard of Daniel if he had compromised at this early stage of life? His name would be unknown to modern man, and we would never have received this wonderful book. With that in mind, it is good to be able to say that these young men stood their test and as a result, we are all blessed this day. We want to realize that we are remembered for only two things, our accomplishments, and our failures.

As you and I go through life, there will always be times where we are going to have to make decisions to do the right thing. When these times come, and they most certainly will, we will either decide to go with God despite the cost. Or, we will choose to compromise. The truths contained in this passage will help us as we face the serious crossroads of life. Today, I would like to speak for a little while on this thought, Conquering Compromise. My prayer

is that we can glean the strength that we need to always make our stand for the Lord.

I.. V. 1-7 **THE PROBLEMS AT HAND**

A. These Hebrew boys faced several problems. Each of these had the potential to derail them and lead them off on a spiritual tangent. However, the problems they faced, were not that different from those we face daily in our world.

See how the following four items compare to prison or military life.

1. V. 1-2 A New Home - These boys had been brought up in and around Jerusalem. There they were constantly reminded of their God and of His importance to life. The Temple with its sacrifices was there. The priests and the scribes were there teaching. The prophets were preaching the message of Jehovah. Now, they are slaves and have been hauled off the Babylon. Here, they are surrounded by heathen worship, heathen images and heathen people. It would be easy to conform just to fit in (for the Christian, the danger is just as real). It is easy to be spiritual in church. It is easy to be Godly around Godly people. However, when we separate from the Godly influences around us (how many spend lots of time with ungodly friends/relatives), we are placing ourselves in a dangerous position. We are opening up our lives to the possibility of compromise. Therefore, it is important that we are consistent in our church attendance, Heb. 10:25. It is essential that we

surround ourselves with God's people, 1 Cor. 15:33 It is easy to compromise and conform with the world when we are away from the influence of Godliness. Let us examine the music we listen to, the television we watch, the people we have over, and the things we display in the home.

2. V. 3-4 New Knowledge - These young men were taught a new language and new ways of looking at life. All their lives, they had been exposed to Jewish wisdom. Now, they are being taught the wisdom of Babylon. They are being exposed to things they have never been exposed to before. It is becoming a dangerous time for them. There is much pressure being exerted on them to conform to the new world around them. (The same dangers face the Christian in this world today. We are constantly being exposed to new ways of thinking and are being told that our way of looking at the world, through the eyes of God in the Bible, is outdated, ancient and intolerant. There is much pressure being placed on the Christian community to conform to the world's way of thinking. We are told to accept homosexuality, alcohol usage, cursing, promiscuous sexual activity, etc. However, God has not changed His mind about a single thing! What He said 4,000, 3,000, or 2,000 years ago still stands today! It doesn't matter if it hairlips the devil and if the entire world stands against it, the Word of God is sure, it is settled and it is right! Psa. 119:89; Isa. 40:8)

Do we have a new set of rules and expectations?

3. V. 5 A New Diet - All their lives, these four young men had lived by the dietary laws handed down by the Lord. Now, they are faced with new food. Most likely, this food was unclean, by Jewish standards, and most of the meat had probably been sacrificed to idols. Therefore, it would have defiled these men and made them unclean before the Lord. (As Christians, we too are faced with choices that run contrary to the best that God has purposed for us. There are decisions about our choice of entertainment, our music we listen to, choices in our personal relationships. We are confronted daily by choices to either do or not do certain things that can cause us to be defiled. Now, I am saved, (if really saved) and nothing will ever change that! But, the choices I make in life can either build me up, or tear me down as a servant of God. I can never be lost again, but I can become defiled and put on the shelf by God, 1 Cor. 9:27. Therefore, it is extremely important that we constantly guard ourselves in this matter of what we take into our lives. (David had a good plan - Psa. 101:3))

We all know that the diet in prison and military is not the same as the diet on the outside of the walls.

4. V. 6-7 New Names - When these young men arrived in Babylon, they came carrying wonderful names. Each name carried with it a testimony to the person of God.

- a. Daniel - God is my judge
- b. Hananiah - God is gracious
- c. Mishael - God is without equal
- d. Azariah - The Lord is my helper

When they arrived in Babylon, they were given new names.

- a. Daniel became Belteshazzar - Which means, "Bel will protect."
- b. Hananiah became Shadrach - Which means, "Inspiration of the Sun."
- c. Mishael became Meshach - Which means, "Belonging to Aku."
- d. Azariah became Abednego - Which means, "Servant of Nego."

Nebuchadnezzar's goal was to change their identity and hopefully their way of thinking. However, it is plain to see as one reads the book of Daniel, that even though their names were changed their character remained in tact. (The world and the devil will try every tactic to force us to fit into their mold. However, no matter what they say to us, call us, do to us or throw at us in life, they will never be able to change what we are, 1 John 3:1-2! We must never forget that we are the twice born children of the living God!

B. As we journey through life, there are going to be constant attempts by the enemy to get us to let down our guard, to conform to the world's standards and to do things we know to be wrong. However, these times

of testing and trial can be weathered safely and securely. God Himself has promised to help us when we face times of testing - 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:15.

C. Looking at the stand these four young men took there in Babylon will help us when we are faced with a crossroads in life. We see not only **The Problems At Hand**, but next we see **The Purpose Of Their Hearts**.

II. V. 8-16 THE PURPOSE OF THEIR HEARTS

A. V. 8 Their Dedication - The Babylonians could change their homes, their diet, their names, and their education, but they could never change their hearts! These men had decided that they were going to serve the Lord, whatever the cost! It would have been easy to say, "Well, it's all right, everyone else is doing it!" Or "We had better do what the king says." Or "We'll obey the king outwardly, but we'll just keep our faith to ourselves." These options weren't good enough for these men! They were willing to commit themselves to God's will despite the consequences. In the military and prison, we become a number. We are still the same individual and we must separate the lie from the truth. Christians need this same level of determined commitment! Many of us seem to find it too easy to give in to compromise. We need to dedicate ourselves to God and His plan for our lives, even if it costs us our lives! Our duty is to faithfully serve the Lord with all we have and are, the details are His problem, Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58!

B. V. 9-14 Their Desire - In an effort to maintain their ceremonial purity before the Lord, they requested that they not be forced to eat the king's meat. They knew they would be fed defiled and defiling foods, therefore, they requested that they be allowed to have vegetables and water for a ten-day period. Daniel and his friends knew that a vegetarian diet would not defile them and they knew that God would honor their faith in Him. They were willing to put God to the test. It will not always be the easiest thing, nor will it be the most popular thing for you to take your stand with God. It will not always be understood by those around you. However, it is always the right thing! If we will be willing to stand our ground for the Lord, He will certainly honor our stand and bless us. Matt. 6:33. God's Word says that to him that is faithful in a little, to him will He give much.

C. The whole point of this section of the text is that these young men made up their minds that they were going to live for the Lord, and they allowed nothing to change them or to turn them from their purpose! As you follow them through the rest of their lives, you see they stuck to their guns more than once. In chapter 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were willing to die rather than compromise. In chapter 6, Daniel, an 80+- year old man, risked death in the lion's den rather than compromise in his walk with God. What about us, do we have that same level of resolve and commitment to the Lord and His work? Would you be willing to die before compromising with the

enemy? What do we allow in our homes? How do we raise our children? Do we speak with boldness and no apology?

D. Probably not! We compromise in many ways. In our speech, in our dress, in our lifestyles, in our music. They had decided in their hearts that they would die before they would compromise with the world, the flesh or the devil. We need to strive for that same standard in our own lives. There are a lot of God's children who need to recommit (or perhaps "really" commit) themselves to the Lord today! There are many who have let down their guard and have compromised in one or more issues. Others are flirting dangerously close to doing the same thing. It is time for God's children to resolve in their hearts that come what may, they will not disgrace the name of Jesus, and they will not compromise in any area of their life!

E. The dedication of these men can be summed up in 2 words, **Faith** and **Obedience**. They were willing to trust God to do what He had promised, and they were willing to follow Him, regardless of the personal cost. What about you? If you do not want the destination, don't start the trip. We do not need to see how far down the road we can go, when we have no business on it.

III. V. 17-21 THE PROMOTION FROM HEAVEN

A. V. 15-16 **Their Experience** - Daniels experiment worked! God honored His Word and these men were healthier than the others.

These 4 men knew something that many of us never get, and it is this: "If we will do as God says, He will never fail us, even in the slightest way. He will be absolutely faithful to honor His Word and His servants who trust that Word and do as He says. Lam. 3:23; Heb. 6:13-19. Come what may, you can count on the Lord!

B. V. 17-20 **Their Excellence** - After 3 years, (Notice that they maintained their resolve all during this time!), they stood before the king. When he interviewed them, He found that they were head and shoulders above all the others and that they were 10 times better than his wisest counselors. Again, this reminds us that God honors those who honor Him. This does not teach that serving God faithfully will make you smart, attractive and famous. It does teach us that serving God has with it the benefit of being promoted in His work. God placed these men where He could use them in that day, and He did use them in wonderful ways for His glory. He will place us in this day and use us here and now if we will serve Him as we should. The key is to never compromise, even in what we think is the smallest of areas! This is not just a day, week, month, or year, it is for eternity with integrity. God's Word says "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.**" Matt. 5:48

C. V. 21 **Their Endurance** - We are not told how long Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego served there in Babylon, but we are told that Daniel endured, in a place of power

and prominence, for over 70 years. In fact, he was nearing 90 when he faced the lions. This just encourages my heart because it reminds me that no matter how long I live, or where I go in life, if I will always seek to honor the Lord, He will consistently bless me and use me for His glory. God is always looking for vessels which He can fill up and pour out for His glory. However, to be usable, we have to be clean, and to be clean, we must learn to never be guilty of compromise - 2 Tim. 2:20-21. God's house is filled with all kinds of vessels. Some are honorable and are being used for His glory. Others are defiled through compromise in one or more areas of life and cannot be used. Which best describes your life? I tell the individuals that I visit, the **CDC** on their pants (**C**alifornia **D**epartment of **C**orrections) actually stands for "**C**an't **D**efeat **C**hristians" or "**C**an't **D**efile **C**hristians"

Conc: "A giant 400-year-old redwood came crashing down one day, no one could figure out why. The tree had survived four centuries of storms, lightning, and earthquakes--what had felled it?"

"On closer inspection, investigators found that tiny beetles had found their way inside its trunk and had begun eating away its life-giving fibers, weakening its mighty bulk from the inside out.

"In much the same way, the devil tries to bring Christians down through a steady drone of small, seemingly insignificant temptations. While we are fighting and resisting him in one area, he may be setting

up house in another area of our lives. Satan will find ways to creep into our lives for the purpose of eroding our foundations until our fibers have become undone and we come crashing down to the ground. **"Show me a person who has fallen away from their walk with the Lord, and I will show you a person who started making compromises in his or her life long ago."** Are there areas in your life where you have begun to let your guard down? Are you allowing things in you life that you used to think were wrong? **If you have begun the downward spiral of compromise, I am glad I can tell you that Jesus allows u-turns!** He has promised us that we can find unconditional forgiveness when we come home to Him, 1 John 1:9. Where do you find yourself today? If the little beetles of compromise are whittling away at your walk with God, then come back home and allow the Lord to put you back where He wants you to be. Will you look deep inside and do what you need to do tonight? If so, then come to the lord and allow Him to have His way in your life.

As I was getting ready to finish this article, the Lord said, "**Bob, what about tolerance?**" I thought, "Lord, what do you mean?" The Lord replied, "If you tolerate something that goes against My teachings, are you not supporting the sinful nature that I said for you to turn away from?" "But Lord, there is so much sin accepted in the world today." Christ replied, "Remember my Word says to be in the world, but not of it." Do as you say, "Sharing God's Word with **BOLDNESS** and **NO** apology."



The following article is a second article of “[Message in a Bottle](#)” from [NW](#). Those of you that have read her article on “[My Dream Seeker](#),” ([volume 17, July/Aug. 2006](#)) know of the love and expression displayed by the writer, and felt by the reader of the article. Now we present another article as written in a prison cell by [NW](#). (we need a “pen name” for her).

Dream Seeker (Part 2) **What Jesus Christ Has Created for Us**

I want to say I have sat here tonight wishing upon a star that my wishes and dreams will be full of our love. As I watch the twinkle of the brightest star I often wonder if Jesus Christ has his beautiful angels holding on to the stars in a perfect place to make that deep blue sky look and glitter sprinkled through the night



Have you ever wondered how Jesus Christ has made the beauty of the ocean, yellow of the sun, most of all the brightness of the moon.



Once again my dear love, look into the picture of the ocean and close your brown eyes, with the faith you and I have in Jesus Christ we will soon be as free as this deep blue sea.



The water of the deep blue sea, with the taste of salt, I often crave that wonderful taste. From where I lie in my life at this point my thoughts, goals, as much as my dreams, is to only be able to be free as this deep blue sea that Jesus Christ has created. [NW](#)