



Grace to Youth, Inc.

Reaching out to Youth with the Hope of Christ

January 07, 2025

Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

An update on what has happened recently (October 1 thru December 31, 2024):

Again this year Countryside Bible Church stepped up and helped get gift cards for the youth, the men, and the facilities they are in. Some of the gift cards will be used for 'house' items since in some facilities gifts cannot be given directly to the residents. Where possible, I was able to give cards to individuals. EVERYONE was very glad and very appreciative – whether individually or in the group settings they are in.

THANKS to Countryside Bible Church for stepping up and helping in a BIG way!

Gainesville State School (TJJD):

- Although we only are allowed in once a month for Bible study, some not so good news was given just this past month. The Chaplain for Gainesville retired on December 31st. We will really miss him, as he has been coming in on his own free time to make our Bible studies work. I think they already have a replacement, but they will have to go thru all the training as they are not state employees at this time. So, I have a feeling we may have to miss a month or so for the new guy to get the Bible studies back up and running. Please pray for the new Chaplain and for the youth there.

Hope Inn Christ (Decatur, TX):

- The house parents are still doing an amazing job! This is a very demanding job and it is hard to keep good house parents. I really appreciate all their hard work! And they are great to work with!
- We currently have 2 young men there. Josiah has been there the longest – close to a year now – and he is living for the Lord! So proud of him. A couple of months ago, he turned 18 and about that time he earned his high school diploma! He works a couple of part-time jobs and is interested in becoming an EMT. He should start his school next semester!
- The second youth is Cordy. Cordy has come a long way and is also doing well. He also will receive his diploma shortly! That's a BIG praise! He currently works at Imperial Manufacturing in Decatur. Both Josiah and Cordy have been baptized and are living for the Lord! PRAISE!

TDCJ (Adult Prisons, all over TX):

- Still keeping in touch with Angel. He is still in a unit in south Texas. We are still communicating when he can call me. I still would like to visit him – haven't been able to recently, but hopefully I will soon. He currently works as a cook in the lunchroom for dinner. He likes it a lot. But I am trying to help keep him focused on taking the second electrical class – if they ever have one. He has already completed the first electrician program! He has taken a class in Mental Health and if he does well, they may move him to a different facility so he can teach them. He is very excited about that! He has already been trained to be a mentor for math! (Which WAS his worst subject!) He enjoys being able to help others. Also, he recently came up for parole, but was denied. Please keep him in your prayers that he doesn't give up. He has made great progress! Now he needs to be saved! Please remember him in prayer as well.

Tarrant County Juvenile Services (Fort Worth, TX):

- Have made several trips to see the youth at Tarrant County Juvenile. Some went better than others. But after being closed due to Covid (for 4 years), they are finally letting us in again! As of right now, they only let me in twice a month on Wednesday nights. I am still looking forward to hopefully being able to go in at least once a week. They have 6 boys' dorms and they rotate me around to the different dorms. So there is no good way to encourage them on a week-to-week basis. Please pray that they will change this! Again, being able to get in here is a huge praise I have been waiting for!

Denton Freedom House (Aubrey, TX):

- Just started a couple months ago at Denton Freedom House. This is a discipleship program – just like Teen Life Challenge in Desoto where I was for 7 years. It of course is run differently, but it's a great program for people on drugs, alcohol, or just wanting to get closer to God. It has 3 stages and the first stage lasts about 6 months. They start working for the program after 45 days and can get their own job (and have a car) when they hit stage 2. Stages 2 and 3 are optional. Looking to be more involved with them as they figure out who I am. (It took 2 years at Teen Life Challenge – but hoping it doesn't take that long here!) There are currently 20 men in the first stage. I am currently a mentor but my resident left the program. They only match me to one at a time.

And again, THANK YOU for your continued prayers and support. On the next page are some areas of prayer needs that are on my heart at this time. Some requests you have seen before as they still apply!

ONLY in HIS strength,

Ernie Black

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Praises:

- Just for the opportunity to work with and encourage these youth and young men!
- Praise for the protection God has afforded me over **many** miles while traveling to these places.
- Praise for the opportunity to return to TDCJ and Tarrant County Juvenile Services.
- Praise for the youth/young men that have been released and are still walking with the Lord!
- Praise for both Josiah and Cordy. They are walking with the Lord and both have come a LONG way – only by God's grace!
- A lot of the men continue to grow in their walk with the Lord. I have been able to see quite an improvement in most of them! So proud they are walking with the Lord – but please keep them in your prayers!

Prayer Requests:

- Pray that when we share the gospel that it would be accurate and with the love of God, that we would speak clearly, and that the hearts of the young men would be open to hear and respond to God's word.
- Please pray for the young men at Gainesville State School, Tarrant County Juvenile, and Hope Inn Christ, and those in prison and in county jails, for their hearts to be open and for them to come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- That the Lord continues to use me to speak and work with these youth and young men.
- Pray for the guys at Hope Inn Christ: Josiah and Cordy.
- Pray for the young men who have given their lives to the Lord that they may continue to walk in HIS ways – Cordy, Andrew, and Josiah.
- Please pray that I may be a real blessing to these youth and young men.
- Please pray for the staff and administrators at TJJD (Gainesville and Tarrant County) and Hope Inn Christ, and Denton Freedom House.
- Please pray that I will use the opportunities that God gives me for His glory and that I don't mess it up!
- That the Lord would continue to use me for His glory!
- Also pray that I would be able to work with those who would like to do Bible study in Gainesville on a weekly basis. (Right now only allowed to go in once a month.)
- Pray for Angel – that he would give his life to Christ.
- Pray for all the men at Denton Freedom House.