



April 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 (January 1 thru March 31, 2025):

Gainesville State School (TJJD):

- They are still only allowing us to come in once a month right now. We DO hope and pray that this is temporary. They did replace the Chaplain and he is up and running, which is a good thing! I am thinking that in a couple of months this new Chaplain will allow us to do more with the youth. Please help me in praying for that to come about. It is extremely difficult to be able to build relationships with only seeing them once a month. Please pray for the youth there as well.

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! They recently (around the end of February) had a new little one. His name is Lazarus – as in “Lazarus come forth!” Cute kid who I hope and pray comes to know the Lord at a VERY early age!
- We still have 2 young men there. Josiah has been there the longest – over a year now – and he is living for the Lord! So proud of him. He just got accepted to an EMS program in Valley View! Praise God, as this is the field he wants to work in. His classes are MWF 6pm to 10pm. He still will be working on a horse ranch in Alvord during the day.
- The second youth is Cordy. Cordy has come a long way and is also doing well. He just finished high school and will be receiving his diploma soon! He currently works at Imperial Manufacturing in Decatur. Cordy has now been at Hope Inn Christ one year! Both Josiah and Cordy have been baptized and are living for the Lord! PRAISE!
- They are expecting to receive two to three more young men in the next couple of months. After 15 years in operation, the great State of Texas now says we need to be licensed to take in youth younger than 18 – after 15 years! So, all of the youth we take in for the next year or so will have to be at least 18. Melody, one of the house parents, is going back to school in August to get her Masters and then after that, we will again be able to take in youth younger than 18. PLEASE pray that Melody can get her Masters in a reasonable time (with 2 young ones) and that the red tape for the state to get licensed will not be overwhelming. (Yes, that’s a BIG prayer!)

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. He is still working in the kitchen preparing dinner. He likes it a lot. During our last conversation, he told me that he has accepted the Muslim faith. That really blew me away and is a HUGE setback. No telling what they are teaching him. I have not spoken to him after he told me. Don't forget that I can't call him. PLEASE PRAY for him to re-consider and come to faith in the Lord.

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 I am very thankful that they let us back in last year about this time. We had not been allowed in since shutdown for Covid. So far, I have pretty much been going to "C" and "D" pod, splitting up my time between the two pods. Both pods have been REAL respectful and are just now getting to where they have some questions. I will hopefully start going in more often – hopefully! Some of the youth that have just left and are going to TJJD say that they will write me. Please pray that they do and that I can still be involved with them. Again, being able to get in here is a huge praise I have really been waiting for!

Denton Freedom House (Aubrey, TX):

- Still going to Denton Freedom House and mentoring a young man there. Again, 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. I try to go to some of their activities and they also run a Coffee Shop in Denton, and I sometimes get to work with them there. Pray that I can be more actively involved with them. (Teen Life Challenge took me 2 years before I was able to be heavily involved.)

Adult and Teen Challenge (Desoto, TX):

- I got a call from one of the employees I worked with a couple of months ago. They are starting a Mentoring program for the guys in the second phase of the program. He wanted to know if I was interested – as it is really NOT a part of the official program. So, I have gone for 2 months as they are trying to get it off the ground. Some of the men I worked with are now employees – which is a GREAT PRAISE! Please pray this will work out.

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! Josiah got accepted to EMS school and Cordy got his diploma!
- 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!
- Baby Lazarus!

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 – and the new ones to come.
- Pray for the young men who have given their lives to the Lord that they may continue to walk in HIS ways – Cordy, Riley, Jonathan, Donovan, Dalton, Noah, Chris, Cody 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 – and reject this Muslim faith.
- Pray for all the men at Denton Freedom House.
- Pray that Sergio would come back to the program he left.