Prisons, Jails and Juvenile Facilities
Stories Slip Behind Locked Doors and Into Locked Hearts.

Going Back to Prison!

I just had the opportunity to go to a youth prison for the third year in a row. On the previous visits I had told a story. These youth are tough, mostly gang members. The answer to this one question is important to me ... “What is the long-term effect of these stories on the young men?”

This return trip offered an opportunity to see how God might answer my prayer to know if the story style of ministering to these hard core youths was making any impact.

Just before going to the group of about 15 youths who would hear my story this time, the host took me with him as he stopped at a different area of this locked-up facility. This host is part of a group that ministers weekly to these juvenile offenders. A young man “Jack,” I will call him, who was going to be released the next day. This prisoner and the host wanted to meet to say “goodbye” to each other. As we approached, Jack looked at me and said, “Hey, I remember you.”

We three sat down to talk and I began to ask some questions. I wanted to know what Jack remembered from the storytelling the year before, and perhaps find out if the story had any long range impact. So I asked him, if he remembered what I had talked about. He said, “You told a story,” Then, before I could ask if he remembered what story I told, Jack started to retell the story of Genesis 35:1-5. Then he said, “That story kept me thinking about what idols might be in my life that I still hiding.”

I was astounded.

AM, USA

[A day after this prison letter came to us, a note from India arrived. An India pastor who uses STS Bible storytelling wrote ... “In recent past, I had been invited to speak to teens in a Youth Camp. In the middle of my discourse, I asked, ‘How many of you know the ‘Ten Commandments” by heart?’

"There were many teens present, but not a single person could raise hand. Almost all these teens have come from Christian homes and some whose parents are active in ministry. I was surprised to witness blank response!

“After the message, I discussed with the coordinator and expressed my regret to him. We can’t simply blame the children; the reason for lack of understanding of God’s word in present day youth is due to lack of effective Christian parenting at homes as well as us in ministry. I thank
God for Simply The Story which teaches us how to keep God’s WORD in our heart pocket …”

[Notice the contrast in the church kids, believers who could not remember the Ten Commandments and this teenage believer who as a prisoner a year later was still remembering and being affected by the story he heard one time!]

To see what happened during an earlier visit to this same prison see My Time in Juvenile Lockup

Women & Children Lifted Up

“Simply the Story has been a wonderful way to share the truths of God's Word at jail and in Juvenile Hall. The women, boys and girls are remembering the stories and seeing that they can hear from God through the stories that He has placed in the Bible.

“The ladies at the jail where I share STS are often at a place where they are very broken and feel very unworthy. I shared the story of the two men who went up to the Temple to pray, one, a Pharisee, who others might think lived a very worthy life, and the other, who viewed himself as sinner.

“I saw light come into the faces of the ladies in jail as they realized that the one who said he was a sinner was the one justified in the eyes of God, because of the attitude of humility in his heart toward God. During the discussion of that story, God was restoring hope to these imprisoned ladies.”

Gayle - Ukiah, CA USA

[If you want more information how STS is being used by Gayle in this area of ministry, email us and we will forward your request. You need to put the subject line "Request to connect with Gayle."

Hint: It might help for prompting speedy reply, if you choose to do so, to write a note in the body of the letter describing yourself and your interest in connecting with Gayle.]

But What Did They Remember?

Modavador G’s use of stories to minister in a particular high security prison was a new experience for him. But after only three times of ministering there, something significant occurred.

A fourth visit to this prison was a time of celebrating the upcoming release of three Christian inmates. After various chaplains preached to 90 inmates, three soon-to-be-released inmates came forward to give their goodbye testimonies. These prisoners had been ministered to for
years by chaplains and visiting speakers. The first inmate told this. “God showed me stuff in the Martha/Mary story that is going with me to the outside.” (Then he shared specifically the parts in the story that impacted him.)

The next prisoner testified, “That glass of oil story helped me and I will never forget it.” (The felon then told the part in the Elisha story that touched him, about God's care for the widow.)

The last man shared this. “That King David story was about me.” Testimony as told to us by Modavador G SC, USA

[Amazingly, after the years of preaching and teaching that Christians had given these prisoners, we see in their testimonies, that three for three, they mentioned the Bible "stories." Wonderfully, the inmates even remembered the story content and made personal applications to themselves from the stories.]

You can connect directly with Modavador on use of story for evangelism and discipleship in working with felons or on his Holy Hip Hop, Spoken Word version of God’s Story: From Creation to Eternity. Please email us and put on subject line, "Request to connect with Modavador."

Hint: To get faster response, write something about yourself and your interest in connecting with Modavador.

More Prison stories Users & Users: Outreaches