



CAPTIVATING

Thoughts

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Christmas Prayers

Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks that in your great mercy and compassion you allowed your dear Son to become incarnate and through him redeemed us from sin and eternal death. Enlighten our hearts by your Holy Spirit that we may always be thankful for such grace and be comforted in all trouble and temptation, and at last, obtain eternal salvation; through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, by your incarnation you united things earthly and heavenly. Fill us with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill, that we may join the heavenly host in singing praises to your glory; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Team Updates

As the holiday season approaches, we are thinking of you and looking forward to our next opportunity to gather. Until then, here are a few team updates.

Marcia – We welcome your prayers for our sister Marcia who was hospitalized last month because of COVID. Notes of encouragement can be sent to the C2C address, and we will get them to her.

Kristi – Graduating with her Masters this month. Congratulations!

Leslie – Enjoying learning Capoeira (Portuguese pronunciation: [kapu'e(j)re] or [ka'pwejre]) a Brazilian martial art, combat sport and self-defense system that combines elements of dance, acrobatics, and music.

Chandra – The mission trip to Brazil was so good because it was SO GOD! There were amazing opportunities to teach, preach, and minister at several worship services and area churches. A personal tour of the local women's prison by the State Director of Prisons that included extended time to swap programming and reentry initiative efforts, as well as an invitation to tour the men's unit when we return. Conversations have begun about a trip next Spring.

Lori – Traveling, book signing, and writing her next book!

Barry – Traveling, ministering. and excited to be back meeting with the men at the Beto Unit.



Coach is pictured with the students of NACEMT and Cindy (the other redhead) on a suspension bridge in Florianopolis, Brazil.



Photo taken in front of a mural painted in the women's prison. Pictured L to R: Milo, Prosecutor and author of a faith-based curriculum for prison ministry; my translator and a ministry student; Coach; Marta, the Director of Prisons; two prison officers.



NACEMT students (15-25 years old) preparing their hearts and praying for the speaker(s) 30 minutes before each service.

Ice Breaker

by Coach

Recently I was tasked with preparing an inspirational “Ice Breaker”. I pray my talk translates in this shorter, written version.

Grab a friend or two, a pen and a piece of paper. Write the words Holiday Gifts vertically (below). Then on the left side write a word that describes a negative emotion, feeling, or character trait. Then on the right side, write a positive emotion, feeling or character trait. Each must begin with the letter on that line. See examples. GO!

NEGATIVE

POSITIVE

<u>Odd man out</u>	H _____
_____	O <u>Overjoyed</u>
_____	L _____
_____	I _____
_____	D _____
_____	A _____
_____	Y _____
_____	G _____
_____	I _____
<u>Frosty</u>	F <u>Fruity</u>
_____	T _____
_____	S _____

The Holidays stir many emotions, some good and some not so pleasant. Emotions are triggered by thoughts. The more attention given to the thought, the more it reaffirms the emotion. Is it any wonder 2 Cor. 10:5 reminds us to *take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ*.

Negative emotions don't invite company. In fact, they drive people away. Proverbs 15:4 *tells us a gentle or kind word turns away wrath*.

God said we can be “Frosty or “Fruity”. We know people are attracted to fruit. Gal. 5:22-23. If you struggle with a “frosty” attitude, read Ps 145:15-18 and trust the one who can *melt the ice, and cause the waters to flow!*

Now tear the piece of paper down the middle and shred the left side with all the negative words. Then meditate on the positive thoughts. Phil. 4:8 ♥

AN EXERT FROM

Free to Live

by John Eldredge

Let's come back to Zacchaeus and the town harlot who crashed the party to weep at Jesus' feet. They were, both of them, very keenly aware of their failures. They knew they had fallen way short of God's goodness. And not only did they know it, but so did everyone else. So they bore the double weight of their own personal shame and the contempt of their communities. And yet, when they encountered Jesus—a man whose goodness shone like the sun—they ran toward him. How could it be?

They knew he was merciful. They knew they would find forgiveness.

As will you. God's promise to us is total forgiveness if we will come to him and ask for it: *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9)

This offer is for everyone. It is for you and for me. And it is our only hope. ♥

AN EXERT FROM

Free to Be Me

by Stasi Eldredge

Like you, I have areas in my life that I want and need to change. But I've learned the freeing truth that God is not going to love me anymore or any differently when I do. Not when I finally lose the extra weight I need to and keep it off, not when I exercise regularly, not even when I am kinder, nicer, and more organized. Jesus's love for me, my Father's love for me, never changes. Yeah, okay, fellowship may be strained at times, but his

heart toward me does not change. He is passionately in love with me. Even better, I think he likes me. And by the way, he's got a pretty huge thing for you, too. Yes, you. Right now.

The voice of shame says, I basically hate me; I need to get rid of me. The voice of discipline says, I've got to fix me because me is not good. God says, I love you; let me restore you. I like that one best. ♥

Know Your Value

author unknown

A father said to his daughter, “You graduated with honors, here is a car I acquired many years ago. It is several years old. But before I give it to you, take it to the used car lot downtown and tell them I want to sell it and see how much they offer you. The daughter went to the used car lot, returned to her father, and said, “They offered me \$1,000 because it looks very worn out.” The father said, “Take it to the pawn shop.” The daughter went to the pawn shop, returned to her father and said, “The pawn shop offered \$100 because it was a very old car.” The father asked his daughter to go to a car club and show them the car. The daughter took the car to the club, returned and told her father, “Some people in the club offered \$100,000 for it since it's a Nissan Skyline R34, an iconic car and sought out after by many.” The father said to his daughter, “The right place values you the right way,” If you are not valued, do not be angry, it means you are in the wrong place. Those who know your value are those who appreciate you. Never stay in a place where no one sees your value. ♥

You are made in God's image, according to His likeness. Gen. 1:26

If you don't know your own value, somebody will tell you your value, and it'll be less than you're worth.
- Bernard Hopkins