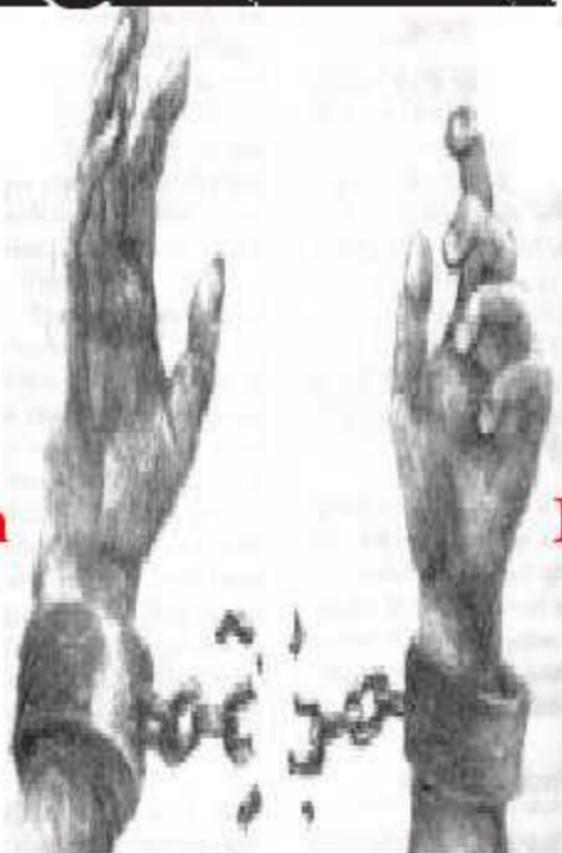


A Lessons For Life Book

BREAKING



Prison

**Ministry
101**

FREE

KEITH HAMMOND

Acknowledgements

*God,
I give you all the glory, honor, and praise
for all that you have done in, to, and through, my life.
Thank you for Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.*

*To my wife, in this 28th year together,
thank you for all your prayers.*

*To my daughters, my love for you goes beyond words.
Many blessings to you both.*

*To my grandsons, it is a great joy to be Blessed
with your unconditional love.*



Breaking Free - Prison Ministry 101

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, King James version.

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Read This First

We hold in our hands the key to a great treasure box. Inside the box is gold, silver, and other precious jewels.

The box in which these treasures are held in is rather unusual, not very appealing at all. It is surrounded by armed guard towers, razor wire and electrified fences. Not many people want to go in.

But inside there is great treasure . . . men and women, precious to God, waiting to get out, and they will get out.

Imagine that you get up one morning, get prepared for work, kiss your wife and kids, pull out of the driveway and arrive at work just as you have been doing the past ten years. Except, today is different. After your lunch break, your supervisor tells you the company is cutting back and your job is now no more.

You've been on that job since you were given a break by the judge ten years ago when he decided not to send you to jail for DWI.

Because of the bad news, instead of going back to work after lunch, you agree to go to a bar with some other co-workers, because they want to cheer you up and say their goodbyes. You say OK and say to yourself that you'll only have one beer. After all, you've been clean for ten years.

That one beer turns into two. And, because you've been clean for ten years, you can't hold your alcohol like you used to. Now, you're drunk. Instead of having someone drive you home, you believe you can make it on your own. Bad decision. Now, it's nighttime. Four hours later. Hard to see the road with blurring vision. But you drive anyway. And you hit something. You black out. When you wake up, you're behind bars. The charge: DWI. Thankfully the something you hit, wasn't a someone...read on.



Yes There's More

You come up before the same judge who gave you a break ten years earlier. He even remembered you. But this time, no breaks. You are tried, convicted and sentenced to serve time in a correctional facility — separated from your children, your spouse, your family, your friends. And just a few days ago, everything in your life seemed to be OK.

Now, you're in prison; surrounded by a lot of people who are not so nice to you and not the best influences in the world. Your wife dies two weeks later from a drunk driver. She had to get a job because you're no longer there to support the family. And coming home from work, she was sideswiped.

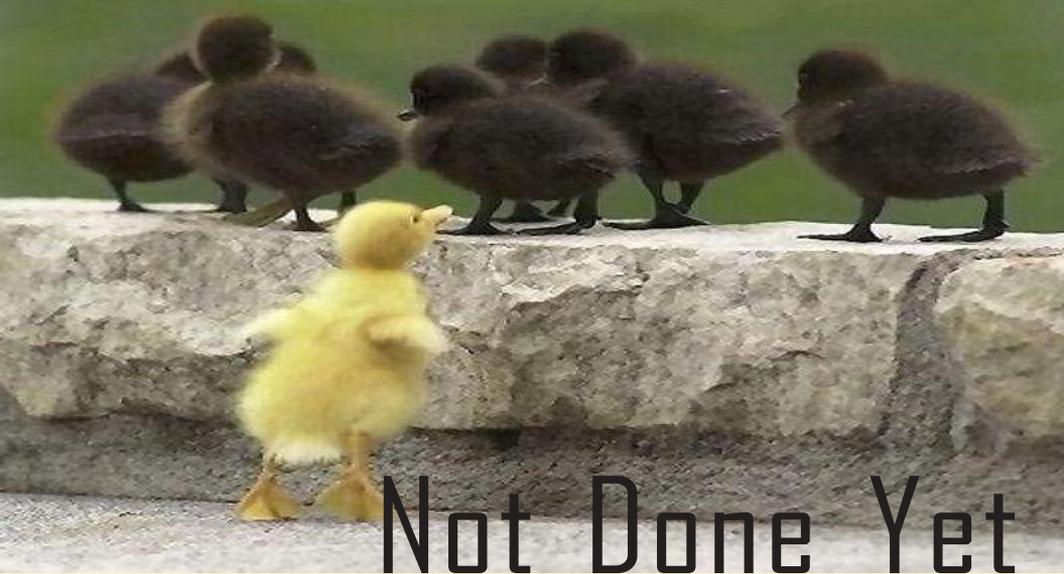
You cannot attend the funeral. Your children are placed in foster care. You may not get them back again. Your family stops calling you and coming to visit. You are lonely. You have little hope. You were just trying to survive and had not made plans for the future. Especially this future. You're still dazed that you're there in the first place. It all seems like a bad dream. Like you're watching someone's else's life on the big screen. A man getting out hands you a business card and says "they can help you". You want to know more, but he's out and you're still in. You see and pick up a Bible, but you don't know where to start. Because you don't understand it, it ends up under your bunk. Keep reading...

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Not Done Yet

Imagine you were this yellow duck.

You returned home from prison after being away a long time.

Everything about your life has changed.

Your wife is gone. Your kids in foster care.

It seems the entire world has turned its back on you as if you no longer exist, or are no longer welcome.

How would you feel?

You sink into depression. You can't believe this is you. You wake up each day and look in the mirror. You see your face but can't fathom how you got here to this place. You were doing so well. Ten years went by without you having a drink. What happened?

Two years later, your cell opens and you are told you can leave. You know you have two more years left, but somehow you're getting out. You have the clothes on your back and \$100 they gave you at the gate. You go to where you used to live. You find out where your kids are, but the state says you have to have a steady job and a place for them to live before you can petition to have them back. You're 35 and have to start over.

You need a job, but you don't have clothes for an interview. The only thing you know how to do is drive a forklift and your certification expired while you were in prison. So did your drivers license. You don't have a degree and you've been out of the job market two years. You try to get your old job back, but your old boss looks at you funny and says he won't hire an ex-con. You are starving, cold, desperate. You get a motel room for a night, buy something to eat and now half the \$100 is gone. You get up the next morning and walk the streets looking for something, anything, because your money is running out. You apply at temp agencies and other places but no one wants to hire a felon. And it's not over yet...keep reading...



Don't Lose Hope

You walk past a sign that says "Jesus" and find it is a church. You attend the service, but everyone sits as far from you as possible because you have on the same clothes you left prison in. You hear kids whisper and laugh at you. The ones that aren't laughing are looking at you with pity. The pastor is saying something about "Jesus", but between your paying attention to the looks and the whispering, you can't hear a thing.

You leave the church. You have a meeting with your parole officer tomorrow but you are afraid to go because you already know what he's going to say. You have no job. No place to stay. Wife's gone. Kids were taken. It's the same thing he always says and you're tired of hearing it.

The next day, your parole officer tells you that you have one week to find a job and a permanent place to stay or you will have to go back to prison and serve the rest of your time. Another two years. He also tells you that you need to find an alcoholic anonymous group to attend once a week or you will be violated and returned to jail even if you have a job and place to stay.

Your first thoughts go back to your past. You walk past a bar. Now you're really desperate. You've lost all hope. You begin to think that life was better in jail. At least there, you had a place to sleep, food, and clothes. Then, you remember that business card.

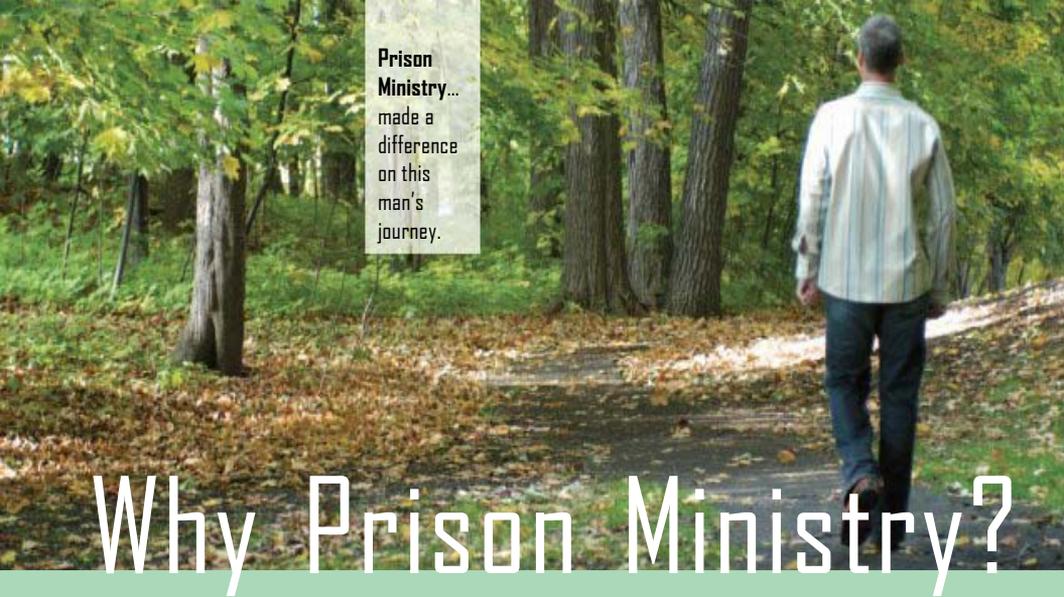
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A man in a light-colored shirt and dark pants is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. The path is covered with fallen leaves, and the trees are tall and thin. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or late afternoon.

Prison Ministry...
made a
difference
on this
man's
journey.

Why Prison Ministry?

Prison Ministry needs people who have been in situations, lived through them and can use their testimony to help others going through them. This man's life is not unlike approximately 2 million people in prisons in the U.S. today. More than half are incarcerated for nonviolent crimes. According to a recent article in Newsweek, it's estimated that 14 million people will spend part of their lives in prison. In 1999, almost 1.5 million children in the U.S. had at least one parent in prison. That alone answers the question of why prison ministry.

The path to prison can take many twists and turns. This man's story is not much different than millions of others who end up incarcerated. However they got there, they are there. Jesus never asked anyone he helped how they got in the situation. He just met their needs right where they were at.

This man had a wife, kids, job, home, car. He was paying his mortgage, and the rest of his bills on time. He was living what most of us know as the American dream. Besides, he had been clean for ten years. Not one drink. After losing his job, which millions of people do, he went with co-workers, then he had one. That one turned into two. Satan was there, waiting at the door. This reminds me of what God told Cain in the book of Genesis. In 4:7 God says, "...But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you but you must master it." For ten years, this man had mastered it. And in one afternoon, with one afterthought, he made a decision that allowed sin to creep in and alter his life on earth.

This man's story answers the question of "Why Prison Ministry." The end of his life was better than the beginning. He found a job, a room for rent, joined a church, met someone in prison ministry, later led the ministry, ministered to former alcoholics, led many to Christ, got his kids back and stayed clean the rest of his life.



Brother Keith Hammond

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Brother Keith is a born again Christian. He is a Spirit-led man of God, teacher and author. His life has been transformed from things such as pride and prison to passion and purpose.

God is the author of the Bible. It is meant to be our instruction manual, our roadmap home. Without it, we are lost. Use the information in these books to help you and others.

God destroys the darkness behind us, to direct us toward our destiny ahead. So whatever you do on your journey, never turn back. God bless you in your walk with Christ. Amen.

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