



Jailbreak!

How to Escape from Prison

Jailbreak: How to Escape from Prison



Learning from God's Word – Tip #1

- Understand literally, Interpret Figuratively, Apply Personally
 - Mathew 18:8 *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.”*
- Understand Literally:
 - The consequences of sin are devastating and eternal (hell). Jesus wants me to be radical in eliminating sin from my life.
- Interpret Figuratively:
 - What are the things in my life that are leading me into sin (i.e. hands and feet)?
 - Friends or Co-workers
 - Finances
 - Circumstances, Places
 - Internet, TV, Movies
 - Selfishness, Pride, Ego, Expectations
- Apply Personally:
 - How can I “cut” these things out of my life to prevent sin?

Acts 16:16-18 (Paul & Silas in Philippi)

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

Acts 16:19-24

19 When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Learning from God's Word – Tip #2

When reading narratives, imagine yourself IN the story....

- In this case, you're Paul and Silas (choose one)
- Review the story with you living it:
 - In a foreign country and city
 - Doing good things – sharing the gospel of Christ
 - Seized, dragged, and falsely accused
 - Attacked by a mob
 - Stripped
 - Beaten with rods; “severely” flogged
 - Thrown in prison (innermost cell)
 - Chained down
 - ***No clue what will happen next***

So....How do you feel? (The you in the prison in Philippi)

- “This is a sign we shouldn’t have come here...”
- “God, where are you? How could you let this happen?”
- “I guess this is what you get when you try to follow God’s will – beatings and prison.”
- “What’s going to happen to us?”
- “I’m afraid. I want to go home.”
- “How grand it is to be worthy of suffering for our faith! Maybe God will bless us with even more suffering tomorrow!”

Acts 16:25

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

How is this possible?

I want this – how can I get it?

1) Suffer for the right reasons

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Peter 2:19-20 "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God."

Suffering because of sin vs. suffering for following God's will

2) Keep a proper perspective on fear

- Adrenaline vs. Anxiety
- God vs. Man
- Earthly vs. Eternal

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:17, 26, 31 "Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. 26 "So do not be afraid of them. 31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

2) Keep a proper perspective on fear (continued)

It is not God's desire for you to be afraid of life or people or circumstances or the future. It is God's plan for you to fear him.

Isaiah 8:11-13 The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said: 12 "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. 13 The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread

Matthew 10:28 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

3) Understand God's true nature

Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4) Don't go it alone

Ecclesiastes 4:11-13 9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Hebrews 10 8:11-13 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

5) Understand “church” and “worship”

Both are portable and not constrained by place or time

John 4:21-24 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Matthew 18:21-20 19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

The rest of the story

Acts 16:25-28

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Acts 16:29-36 Jailer and his whole family hear the gospel. Jailer washes their wounds and his whole family is baptized. City officials release Paul and Silas.

Back to tip #1 – Interpret Figuratively, Apply Personally

Prison comes in many forms - dark, lonely, uncertain, stressful places and times. God seems distant

- Physical problems
- Self loathing
- Marriage struggles
- Work uncertainty
- Conflict in relationships
- Habitual sin
- Worry and Anxiety about future, depression
- Concern for your children

Are you living in prison?

How to escape your prison

- Locate the source of suffering
- Be afraid (of the right things)
- Trust in God's presence and love
- Don't put yourself in solitary confinement
- Muster the strength to worship
 - God is still God

Worship at the low points

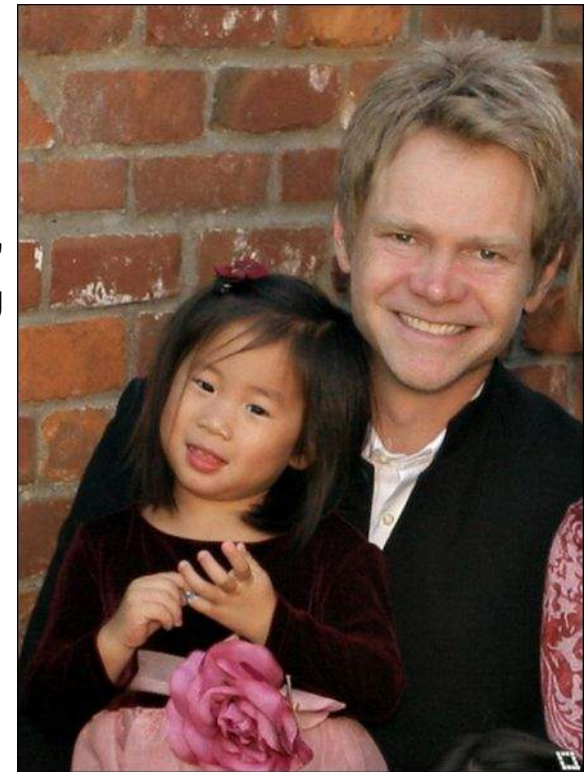
King David – 2 Samuel 12

Job – Job 1:1-21

Steven Curtis Chapman

"Blessed Be Your Name" was also the first song Chapman sang May 21, the day of Maria's death, when he wasn't sure he'd ever be able to sing again. Inspired by the story of Job, at one point the lyrics repeat, "He gives and takes away."

"As I sang this song ... it wasn't a song, it was a cry, a scream, a prayer," Chapman explained to the audience of nearly 5,000. "I found an amazing comfort and peace that surpasses all understanding."



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Blessed be your name
In the land that is plentiful
Where the streams of abundance flow
Blessed be your name

Blessed be your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed be your name

Every blessing you pour out, I
turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say...
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your glorious name

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Blessed be your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's all as it should be
Blessed be your name

Blessed be your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be your name

Every blessing you pour out, I
turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say...
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your glorious name

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You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, Blessed be your name

You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, Blessed be your name

Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your glorious name

Blessed be the name of the Lord
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Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners