



# Beginnings: Starting anew is good for the soul!

**Happy New Year 2019!** Have you ever felt stuck, or caught in a rut? The daily grind of routine and repetition are so familiar that you don't even have to think. It's ingrained. Aren't you glad that the previous year ends, and we all can begin a brand new one? Many people get hung up on yesterday with little hope for today because they're stuck in the past. Interesting how we have "the freedom of choices, but not the freedom of our consequences." God wants to do something new in us if we will let Him have His way. I often tell inmates, "God doesn't care about your past or where you've been. He cares more about where you're going with Him." Our past (and everyone has one) can often be paralyzing. We feel we can't go on, and the memories haunt us. Those guilt ridden feelings won't let us move on. That's where most of my conversations center on with the guys and gals. Often buckets of tears are poured out due to the years of accumulated regrets and guilt. Most look in at self, rather than up to the One who created and knows us. He's the One who cares so very deeply about our burdens. The Word of God provides our guidance and instruction to break free from a paralyzing past and have a new beginning.

I met a man in a pod who was fighting back tears, and asked if we could talk. For privacy we went into the small nurse's room. He stated, "I could feel some powerful energy coming from you that moved me emotionally, and broke me down. I knew I needed to talk with you." I told him it wasn't me but the hundreds of prayers and the power of the Holy Spirit that he sensed. This young man began to tell of all the types of abuse he had experienced as a child, and the more recent tragic loss of his son. At only six weeks he'd died in his Daddy's arms. He used these tragic circumstances as excuses to plummet into addiction as his way to cope. His 10 year marriage broke down, and ended in divorce due to blaming one another for their son's death. I told him that it was common for marriages to end after a child's death. He broke down

again in grief over his own loss of innocence through sexual abuse, and the death of his infant son. All these layers of past pain were poured out, and we got down to the emptiness of his heart. We weren't made to do life without our Creator God. He made us to be connected to Him in an intimate love relationship. I illustrated how our sin had separated us from a holy God. We can't fix or change ourselves, so God has the only answer for mankind's irreconcilable condition. He sent Jesus, God's Son, as a man to be our substitute so we could be reconciled back to Him. At this point in our conversation I asked if he wanted to give his life, and heart to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. Yes, he wanted to receive Christ to fill the void in his heart. This was truly a divine appointment! He was looking for answers but in all the wrong places. God brought us together in the PCJ to share this life changing message. Jesus became our Way back to the Father. His Word is the source of all Truth. His death became our life. When we encounter this love we are made new, a new creation in Christ Jesus. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor. 5:17 It's amazing how many people come to Jail not looking for God, but God is looking for them.

With the start of a New Year we must renew our dedication to what is obviously the hand of God as He touches lives here at the Polk Co. Jail Ministry. Will you commit to praying daily, giving faithfully, and telling others of God's Sovereign hand on this ministry? We have watched God do some amazing things in 2018! I believe it is due to the prayers of God's people. Your petitions before God have become reality that the volunteers and I get to experience daily. Without your faithful and generous gifts to the ministry we couldn't be fiscally responsible. **THANK YOU** to each one! What a GREAT GOD we serve! Amen!!

– Chaplain Jerry

## Tip of the Month: The touch of the Master changes everything!

Polk Co. Jail Ministry, Inc. , 1985 N.E. 51st Place, Des Moines, IA. 50313 • [www.polkcountyjailministries.com](http://www.polkcountyjailministries.com) • [Jerry.VanCleave@polkcountyjailministries.com](mailto:Jerry.VanCleave@polkcountyjailministries.com) • Phone: (515)-875-5711  
\*\* Please forward all gifts to Polk County Jail (1985 N.E. 51st Place, DSM, 50313), [www.polkcountyjailministries.com](http://www.polkcountyjailministries.com) through Paypal - trusted and easy!



## Shiela Simmons – A transformed life

My name is Shiela and the last time I went to jail was July 11, 2017. It had been another arrest from my three year run of selling drugs on the streets. I grew up in a nice house on the south side of Des Moines. My brother and I always had nice clothes, plenty of food, and our dad bought us mopeds. We lived in a nice clean environment. My mom and dad divorced, but my dad bought a house right down the street and they co-parented my brother and me. My dad was an alcoholic. I started drinking and smoking pot at 11 years old. My mother passed when I was 17, and my brother was 15. After my mom passed my brother went to live with our dad. I left the state to be with my boyfriend who I later married. We had three kids, a girl and two boys. Life was good. I was happy and my kids and I lived well. After 13 years of marriage my

husband was on the road a lot, and things were just not working with me being at home alone any more. We divorced and I raised my kids in the house we'd bought. My kids graduated, so I decided to sell the farm house and buy a house in town. I bought that house and continued to work hard. Then I began to lose interest in work, relationships and even my family. I lost my job and rented rooms out in my home to make ends meet. The people I rented to smoked meth. I didn't pay too much attention because I was very tired of making ends meet by myself. In my self-destruction I began to smoke and sell meth. I had my own hours, and made as much money as I wanted any day of the week. Sounds great huh?

I went to jail 8 times in those few years, and ended up with charges of possession with intent to deliver. These charges could be up to 25 years, and I had other charges as well.

(Continued on back ►)

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- 2019 will be the greatest year the Jail ministry has experienced as the Holy Spirit is poured out on all the incarcerated, and the staff of the Sheriff's office.
- Prayer that volunteers and myself would stay ever close to the Lord and be directed by the Holy Spirit to His divine appointments daily.
- Pray for volunteer David Hamlin, wife Edna, and son Jason as they continue their battle with cancer.
- Prayer for my wife Patty as she begins acupuncture treatments for neck. For breakthrough for the pain!
- Prayer for Board member Bud Krisinger receiving chemotherapy for leukemia.
- Prayer for the new Sheriff Kevin Schneider and his administrative staff with daily pressures and demands.
- Wisdom to best use my time between the Sheriff's office staff and the Jail.
- Hedge of protection for our public servants the Detention Officers in the Jail, and those Deputies out on patrol.
- Officers would help promote Sunday services at 10:00 A.M. and a greater number of inmates would awaken to watch.
- Many opportunities to speak and promote the ministry around the Polk Co. area in local churches, businesses, and small groups in 2019.
- Prayer for volunteers to have a renewed commitment to healthy and godly relationships with their families.
- Three new churches would begin to support the ministry in 2019.
- Brokenness would occur with the arrested brought to the Jail, and they'll see their need for a relationship with Jesus.
- An insatiable appetite of the Scriptures for the ones who have given their hearts to the LORD.
- God's people will be fervent, strategic, committed, and deliberate with their prayers for the Jail ministry this new year. Prayer moves God's heart and hand.
- Those who find Christ while incarcerated will leave the Jail single minded, and focused on pursuing Him with all their hearts and minds. They'll determine to resist temptation, and not go back to the old life styles and friendships.
- Inmates will learn disciplines of the faith; to pray, read God's Word daily, get connected to a Bible centered local church, have a mentor, and find gainful employment.
- People will see the value of the ministry, and partner with us.



Please trim along the dashed line and insert in the enclosed envelope with your gift.

(Continued from front ▼)

While I was in the Polk County Jail they pulled me out of my cell to speak to Chaplain Jerry who told me my youngest son died from a motorcycle accident. Of course I was devastated beyond belief, he consoled me, and we prayed. After that news I lost all faith in God, our society, and systems. I truly did not care what happened to me next. Over the next two months in Jail Chaplain Jerry continually checked on me and insisted I keep praying and I did. I was offered a drug court program. I was able to get through with prayer and the confidence of the Chaplain that I could still have a good life. If it had not been for his willingness to help me continue to pray I would not have had enough faith to choose this program to get my life back on track. I would have never been able to rebuild a relationship with God and my faith, or to

## ANSWERS:

- All glory, honor, praise and thanksgiving to God for His huge blessings on this ministry in 2018! All the spiritual seeds sown of God's truth into countless lives. All who were disciplined in Bible studies, and for every precious volunteer. Thank God He is rescuing lives not arresting them. He brings people from all over the world to hear and respond to the gospel!
- All the lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit! 483 gave their lives to Christ, 1,021 Bible studies were conducted with over 12,000 inmates involved, and we gave out nearly 4,500 Bibles in 2018!! PTL!!!
- We thank the Lord for the continued open door in partnering with the Sheriff's office.
- I thank God for each of you, our great partners in this ministry! Bless each of you for your commitment to pray powerfully and give financially!

## MOST WANTED:

- Clothes closet needs; shoes and coats for men only.

## Ministry Monthly Report: January 2019

	Monthly:	Ytd:
Inmate Request:	534	534
One-on-One inmate counseling:	870	870
Religious reading materials given:	664	664
Bible Study groups:	89	89
Inmates involved with studies:	930	930
View Worship Service:	447	447
Volunteer Hours:	245	245
Number of Volunteers:	26	26
Bibles given:	485	485
<b>Number of New Believers:</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>

be here now for my two other children who need me now more than ever. They had lost their brother and, it seemed they were going to lose their mom as well. I thank Chaplain Jerry every time I see him, and give thanks to my God who has loved me though all of this. I'm thankful He's helped restore my faith, and I share my faith in Him with my grandkids at every opportunity to do so.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me put all my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

*Here is another changed life made possible by faithful partners like you!*

Please help support  **The Polk County Jail Ministry**

**YOUR FINANCIAL GIFTS AFFORD THIS MINISTRY CONTINUED GROWTH AND IMPACT IN THE LIVES OF THE INCARCERATED AND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE STAFF.**

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  I am making a monthly commitment of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Please make checks out to the Polk Co. Jail Ministries Inc. and use the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. THANK YOU!)