



FROM HANDCUFFS TO A NEW HEART

by Lael Griess

In 1972 a 10-year-old little girl walked into a jail for the first time in her life. She wasn't visiting a family member or attending an educational field trip. She was in handcuffs, shuffling into a crowded cell with other jaded and rough-edged criminals.

Though her mother was a faithful Christian, Pam's father had abandoned her when she was four. Then the sexual abuse began. When the pain was too deep and too stifling to bear any

longer, she sought release through drugs. At just nine years old, she rolled up her sleeve and tried her first shot of heroine; she was already smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and popping pills.

By the time she was ten years old, a myriad of hard-core drugs were part of her routine—anything to numb the pain. When most little girls curled up in bed with the soft glow of a nightlight and a teddy bear clutched in their arms, Pam



“fell asleep with a bottle of Jack Daniels at (her) side.” She was angry, bitter and continuously high.

Inside a jail cell for the first time, she met a 25-year-old man who posted her bond, and together they ran away from home, sharing a life full of drugs and repeated arrests. When

he died in a tragic drunk-driving accident, Pam was left to fend for herself...again. As the years passed, she floated from man to man, using them and being used by them and always using drugs.

The doctors ushered family members into her room one at a time so that they could say their goodbyes.

Eventually, Pam found herself behind bars again. This time the charge was serious, and she was sentenced to prison. When she was released, still boiling with anger and seething at the world, her drug habit finally caught up with her. Pam’s heart gave out, and though she had a defibrillator installed, she continued using drugs. “What did I have to lose?” Pam told CBI. “There wasn’t anything that mattered to me.” Others labeled her “worthless,” “hopeless,” “a lost cause,” and she believed every word. She never imagined breaking the cycle of reincarceration, and she didn’t care.

It wasn’t until Pam lay bound to a hospital bed—her defibrillator had misfired 12 times in 1 day—that she finally began to care. The doctors ushered family members

into her room one at a time so that they could say their goodbyes.

But God had another plan. That day Pam knew she could serve God and live or deny Him and die. Without Christ, she was a lost cause, but submitting her life to Him, He could redeem her. To Pam, the message was clear, and she maintains that “God doesn’t stutter.” She survived, and when she left the hospital, she entered the church.

That same year, Pam became a faithful CBI student, voraciously finishing lessons so that in just four years she has

nearly graduated from The Center for Advanced Studies. “I’d be lost without CBI,” Pam says. “I found you had to really truly study the questions out, really dig to learn the truth. **And that’s when the blessings began to show up—the changes in my actions, attitudes, thoughts.**”

When Christ gave Pam a new heart, her whole life changed. She broke old habits, abandoning drugs and alcohol, and became a faithful member of her church. “But the hardest change,” Pam explains, “was losing old friends.” Many hardened friends rejected the Gospel message that she zealously shared with them, and heart-broken, Pam watched them turn their backs on her. Though this experience was painful, Pam wasn’t destitute because the Lord was her sufficiency, and He provided new friends for her.



NOVEMBER PROGRAM GUIDE

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Ask your local radio station to air *Crossroad Connection*.

An important new friend for Pam was her CBI Instructor, Christina, who has become a "lifeline" for her. Through CBI, they have been studying the Word together for years. They write each other and pray for each other's needs; in this way, Pam says that it's almost like they aren't studying the faith, but *living* it.



As Pam studied and grew, she was burdened for the lost. She felt God calling her to minister to those in "dark places." So, Pam

applied to become a CBI Instructor, giving back to the ministry that gave to her. Though she has been released from prison for over 20 years, Pam notes that she is still able to connect with her students because she has walked in their shoes and can compassionately minister to their needs.

CBI is thankful for Pam's contributions to the ministry as a student and as an Instructor. But most of all, CBI is thankful that, through the transforming power of God's Word, an angry and lost 10-year-old girl is now a mature Christian woman with a heart of gratitude and love.

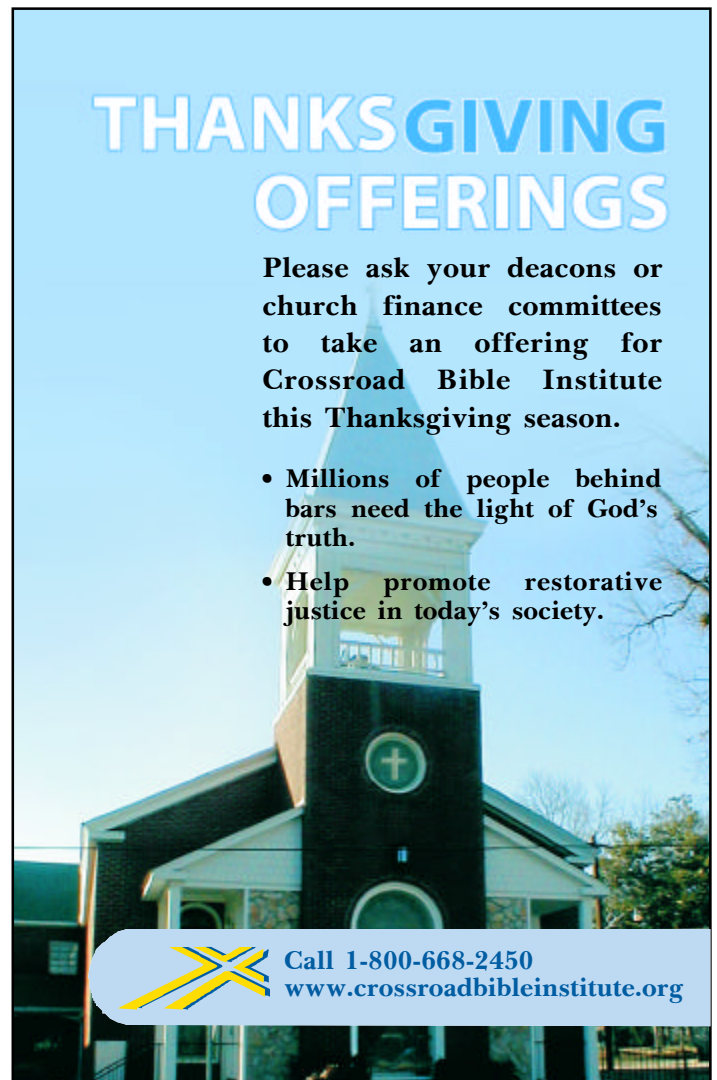


Lael Griess is an Associate Editor at The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute

THANKSGIVING OFFERINGS

Please ask your deacons or church finance committees to take an offering for Crossroad Bible Institute this Thanksgiving season.

- Millions of people behind bars need the light of God's truth.
- Help promote restorative justice in today's society.



Call 1-800-668-2450
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Thanking God by Helping Others

Dear Friends,

Each Thanksgiving, we gather with family at heavy-laden tables to share a meal and count our blessings. Out of gratitude to the Lord, we thank Him for His love and for His provisions. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights (James 1:17), and we do not hesitate to thank Him for these gifts.

But how many of us are willing to take the next step, not only saying thank you, but—like Pam—generously giving back? Pam's story is truly a testimony to the grace of God, powerfully changing the broken life of a woman trapped in a cycle of drugs and incarceration and making her a woman who loves God, studies His Word and now teaches others of His love as a CBI Instructor. The Lord took her hardened heart and made it a *thankful* heart, a heart that gives generously to others.

Many of you already give to CBI, lovingly volunteering your time, energy and prayers to correct lessons, write letters and pray for this ministry. *And we at CBI give thanks for you.* We at CBI also ask, if you have been touched by CBI's ministry this year, would you consider giving financially? The ministry of Crossroad Bible Institute depends upon your financial gifts. In fact, without your generous financial support, this important ministry to God's people in prison could never happen. You can be sure that your donation will impact others like Pam with the life-changing truth of the Word.

We encourage you to make your gift to CBI part of your Thanksgiving celebration this season for, as the apostle Paul admonished believers in 2 Corinthians 9:12, "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God." May God richly bless you this Thanksgiving as you give to His people.

In Him,

H. David Schuringa
President



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- This provision applies for 2006 and 2007 only.
- The IRA holder must be age 70 1/2 or older.
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Would you consider making a contribution to Crossroad Bible Institute from your IRA? We need your financial support to continue sharing the Gospel with those behind bars.

For more information,
please call CBI at
800-668-2450.

