



I WAS IN PRISON, AND YOU CAME TO ME

with Jonathan Irons

▶ FOCUS VERSE

He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets prisoners free
Psalm 146:7

▶ DISCUSSION

- 1. Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? Or not been given proper credit for something you *did* do? (See *Genesis 39*.)**
 - a. Talk about the time in your life when you feel you were most unfairly treated because of falsehoods being told about you.
 - b. What did you most want or need from other people in that moment?
 - c. Who was the person (or people) who finally gave it to you, and how did that make you feel?
- 2. In reminiscing about his grandmother, Jonathan says you never know the value of the knowledge a loved one is trying to give you until you have no choice but to listen to it.**
 - a. What's a piece of wisdom or advice you were given and resisted listening to it until there was no other option?
 - b. Why were you resistant, and what happened when you finally heeded those words?
- 3. What's the most hurtful thing you can remember anyone saying to or about you? (See *Ephesians 4:29* and *Psalms 141:3*.)**



- a. Even though you probably knew the old saying about “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me,” why were those words so painful?
- b. What kind of damage did they do to your sense of self-worth?
- 4. Were you surprised to hear how willing Jonathan has been to forgive the person who wrongly fingered him for a crime back in the 1990s? (See *Ephesians 4:32.*)**
- a. Are you able to understand how Jonathan might view that person as “twice a victim”?
- 5. Be completely honest: What’s your immediate gut reaction to Jonathan’s encouragement for people to get involved in prison ministry? (See *Matthew 25:39-41.*)**
- a. Are you personally hesitant to participate in that kind of work, and if so, what are the reasons behind your reluctance?
- b. Is it tempting to just write off people in prison as being bad people who are unworthy of others’ time and concern?
- 6. Follow Jonathan’s advice to “count your blessings” and name three things, as quickly as you can, that you’re grateful for right now. (See *Psalms 103:2 and James 1:17.*)**
- a. Do you think about these things often and how grateful you are for them, or do you often take them for granted?
- b. How did talking about them make you feel just now?
- 7. When do you find it most difficult to be honest about your feelings and where you’re at in your life?**
- a. Has that reluctance cause you to miss out on help or support that you could’ve otherwise received?
- b. Who are the people in your life most likely to offer that support, and what could you do to establish more open lines of communication with them?

