

My name is Jason Jenkins. First and foremost I'm a brother in Christ. Who also happens to be currently incarcerated, I've been incarcerated for the past 16yrs of my life. I came to prison at the age of 21.

Before I came to Christ I was an insecure follower, selfish drug addict, and a want to be gangster. Who was lazy, reckless, rebellious, self-centered, and ^{had} ~~so~~ many other CHARACTER DEFECTS that if mentioned, would make up the majority of this letter.

I was raised in a dysfunctional household. My father was Absentee for the majority of my life, before he was shot and killed by a police officer in July of 2000. My mother was a hustler who sold drugs, my uncles were drug addicts, gang members, and lived the gang and criminal lifestyle.

I grew up in Watts California, from my birth, up until the age of ten, with my mother, two older brothers, my younger brother, and my little sister. Because my mother sold drugs our financial situation always changed. One moment we're financially stable, then the next we're not. In addition to that, my mother was too dependent on men in my opinion. So as a result of that we always moved around. Growing up I went to 5 different elementary schools, 3 different middle schools, and 4 different high schools.

At the age of twelve we settled in Long Beach. Growing up there was a different experience for me. Because, there was less crime, and the kids there had two parent households. I became a different person in Long Beach. I played sports, hung out at the mall with my friends, and went to parties. I no longer liked to fight and bully other kids.

When I was 15 my mother made the choice to move back to watts. I tried to be the same kid in Watts as I was in Long Beach. However, the teens and tweens in the neighborhood weren't having it. I was bullied. They took my money, cloths, shoes, and would find any reason to pick fights with me. Being bullied left me feeling powerless and rejected, which caused me to have low self-esteem. So, I joined the neighborhood gang seeking acceptance and approval. Upon living the gang and criminal lifestyle, I

dissociated myself from who I really was and conformed into what my environment wanted me to be. I adopted their belief systems and did everything that the gang did in order to be accepted. This included using drugs. Initially I used drugs just to fit in and to be accepted. However, when I felt how the drugs made me feel. They gave me courage, and they numbed the pain and shame that I felt from being bullied. What started out as recreational turned into a dangerous cycle of addiction.

My addiction became so strong that I did or would have done just about anything to feed it. On the nights of September, 5th and 9th of 2005, I robbed Rona Wilson, James McFadden, Stanley Huey, and I robbed and stabbed Feliciano Anaya. As a result of my actions I received a 43yr to life sentence.

As mentioned, I've been incarcerated for the past 16yrs now. Upon entering into the prison system I continued in my criminality, pretending to be someone that I wasn't, carrying around the mask of masculinity. On, April 30th 2012, my 28th birthday, I made a choice to get high. Being considered a reputable gang member in prison comes with a few perks. One of the perks are you don't have to pay for drugs. So I was given a cocktail of drugs and I used them all. In fact my drug in take was so high my heart couldn't take it and it almost burst out of my chest. I had to fight for my life! A few days later on May 5th, 2012. I called out to God and asked him to take control over my life, and I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. The next day I was a new man! I felt light like a heavy burden was lifted off of me. I had a strong desire to read the bible. One of my friends at the time suggested that I start off reading the book of Matthews. I read Matthews and could not stop reading it, God had opened up the eyes of my understanding to his word.

It's been almost 10yrs and I'm still reading my bible! God has delivered me from my drug addiction, I denounced my gang affiliation, I earned my G.E.D, and I'm 11 units away from earning my associates degree in communications. I'm a mentor and coordinator in a wonderful program called "paws for life" (PFL), which is a dog program that takes in stray dogs,

dogs that have been abused and neglected, and or dogs that are about to be euthanized, and they come inside the institution, and we train them with basic obedience training, and help them find forever homes. God has turned me from being a follower to a leader and an example to my community of what he can do in a person's life. Furthermore, God has placed hope in my heart! I know that I was sentenced to 43yrs to life in prison, And that the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) say's "I won't be eligible to go in front of the parole board until 2039". However, God has given me a vision, and a promise that I will be coming home sooner.