



A John and Eileen Sala Prison and Teaching Ministry

www.littlelambsinc.org

Little Lambs Inc.

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Dear Little Lambs,

Happy New Year! Christmas is over. Take down the tree. Pack up the ornaments. Stow away the nativity with the chipped porcelain baby Jesus. And put Christmas back in the attic until next year. Exhausted! And who can blame us. The big box retailers crank up the Santa engine earlier every year—sleigh bells actually rang in *Labor Day* last year. So January is a good time for the family to sit back and relax, unwind, and catch its breath. And get back to its normal routine, sans the glitter and glam. The pseudo-experts who specialize in psychobabble claim that everyone needs a certain amount of “routine.” Sadly, many families use January to get back into their routines of sleeping in on Sunday morning or scrambling for a choice tee time at the Country Club. And they blame it all on Christmas exhaustion.

Let’s consider for a moment just how this mythical family developed such routines in the first place. Chances are, they were regular churchgoers at one time. Maybe the father was an usher and the mother worked on the Kitchen Committee. And maybe the kids were part of the youth group. So what happened? And how? The author of Hebrews gives us a hint. **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”** Hebrews 2:1 (KJV) (emphasis supplied) This verse suggests that “slippage” is the real culprit, a gradual drifting away over time. Empirical evidence would seem to bear this out. When a man loses his appetite for the things of God, it is rarely caused by a single adverse event like a pastoral change or the Trustees’ decision to move the water fountain out of the lobby. No. It happens gradually, usually marked by a series of small steps. In our scenario, perhaps the father’s interest begins to wane in church activities that he deemed nonessential, like the monthly dinner on the grounds and the men’s fellowship. Nothing too serious there. But then the mother gets upset that some of her ideas on the kitchen crew were ignored by the Chairwoman. And the teens, sensing a breach in the wall, begin to whine about their “boring” Sunday school. And things snowball from there. We can be sure that it wasn’t long before the father dusted off that feckless and well-worn cliché that he “feels closest to God in the beauty of nature,” i.e. on the golf course! And poof, this dangerous family routine was born.

We all know that if our car “blows a tire,” that the effect is very sudden and the repair must be made immediately. But a slow leak in the tire is more problematic. The slow leak can go unnoticed for weeks at a time, until it’s too late and we are stranded in the middle of nowhere. Without a jack. And so it is with our faithfulness and commitment. Like that slow leak, a series of small “slips” can spell disaster over time. The passage from Hebrews continues with a very stern warning. **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation;”** Hebrews 2:3 (a). The answer: We cannot. Mere slippage, if left unchecked, can be like the proverbial “death by a thousand paper cuts.”

But unlike a slow leak in the car tire, it’s never too late with God. And the antidote for our family in peril—or for anyone struggling with spiritual decline—is included in this passage. We must heed more earnestly the fundamentals of our faith. That includes paying closer attention to what we know. Seeking God’s plan. Reading His word. Praying without ceasing. Obeying. Whatever it takes. And yes, it does take effort and focus and determination. There is no magic potion. But the slipping and sliding of a man’s faith is fixable. And if indeed he has fallen, the best way for him to get back on his feet is to get down on his knees.

Blessings to all,

Mike Rider, Volunteer



From Tennessee, Gerald writes:

Hello fellow brothers and sisters of the faith. My name is Gerald. I am 35 years old and just now being enlightened to the truth which is Jesus Christ is my shepherd, Lord and Savior. My life was a mess until I found Christ and now that I have, I will never let him out of my heart. Although I am new to the faith, I am sincerely dedicated to walking righteously. to be a reflection my Lord can delight in. I’ve heard so much about you all from a couple in my fellowship and this is my first attempt at hopefully being involved with you all’s wonderful program. I am eager, motivated, and sincere looking for lessons, guidance and understanding. I hope you all get back to me very soon and thank you for your time, fellow brethren and sisters. God bless you. *Keep Gerald in your prayers as a new Christian and pray for his fellowship in prison who are mentoring him!*

Ms. Sala, I doubt that you get this, but I feel I have to say, "Thank You!" As I choked down sporkfulls of prison spaghetti today in between sobs and wiping tears from my face, I screamed for God to give me a sign that I haven't been forgotten. It wasn't 2 minutes later a chaplain was at my window looking to give my cellmate religious reading. This cannot be, 'ironic.' First, "Written in Tears", fell out of the chaplain's stack as I stood there sobbing. It is about a father's loss of his 13 year old daughter. It blew both of our minds. Second, he prayed for me and for once, I actually felt the presence of God. Third, he came back with reading material for me and "I'm Not Coming Back" was in it. I'm now a 3 time, 43 year old loser on a petty parole violation facing another possible 15 months if violated.

I've lost everything in my life that I've ever loved and who has ever loved me. This was actually looking up to be a good year. Before I was arrested, I was supposed to be awarded at my crew's company party in December and found my calling as an umpire. My story is nowhere as difficult as yours, so how do you do it? I have no more paper so I just want to say, thank you again for sharing and being an inspiration. Ryan, IL *We enrolled Ryan in our lessons so he can find out how to do it with the Lord!!*

Our instructions include the message that the lessons is keyed to the King James Bible. We make that really plain. When a lessons comes in answered in another version, we write the inmate a short note that we grade hundreds of lessons a month and we had to choose one version so that our graders do not have to have a multitude of versions and have to guess at the version the inmate is using. Here is a letter form an student who used another version and took our note to heart, the sounds of repentance obvious.

Dear Little Lambs Inc. a John & Eileen Sala Ministry, my deepest apologies for disobeying your instructions and not using a KJV Bible. Your instructions were plain and simple enough to understand but I flat ignored your simple request and used a NKJV Bible instead and for my ignorance, again I am truly sorry and it won't happen again. Honestly, I was so excited upon getting my very first lesson from your ministry that I failed to take the time and effort in using the KJV Bible. I have both the KJV and the NKJV but the KJV is a small compact and I just grabbed my larger bible for that lesson. I am truly saddened and somewhat heartbroken that I have caused some of your elders heartache and distress for my disobedient actions. Please let them know that I am sorry and my intentions were not to perplex them in any way. I can see and understand that they can feel overwhelmed by so many lessons to grade I also can see and understand the simple instructions I disobeyed could have and should have been avoided. Again, I am sorry. I just want to say in all honesty and meant from the heart, that I love you, I love my brothers and sisters in Christ. I will close by saying this: I hope to continue in these studies because it will further impact my spiritual life so that I can change. Without God's people such as yourself and your ministry, there is no other possible way or means to educate me in God's Word so you can rest assured I am anxious and eager to learn more about our Gracious God. May God continue to bless your ministry and the congregation. Signed, Sincere New Student, Steve, Tx

Dear Partners,

Welcome to 2025. I have just returned from a trip up north to visit my daughter and her family. Christmas was beautiful with all the family together. Speaking of family, we ask for your healing prayers for Mary Tinberg, our precious volunteer. Mary comes 4 days a week to the office. She has received a shocking diagnosis and is in treatment at Moffitt in Tampa. Also, our Spanish grader, Santos Galarza, has been diagnosed with stomach cancer. He and his family need your prayers. Although they are elderlies, they are raising 2 high school age grandchildren! And together with his wife, Maria, they grade the majority of our Spanish lessons.

A New Year and we continue to serve the Lord daily. In 2024, Jan mailed out 1,026 new lessons and 541 were returned. That is a return rate of 53%! This is a high rate considering the environment the students live in. Overall, we graded 2,550 English lessons and 390 Spanish lessons. I want to compliment all the volunteers, office workers and graders for this formidable job! They make all this possible and are a group of dear friends.

We have forged a relationship with Earl Bosley here in Sebring, but a volunteer at the Desoto Prison Work Camp in Arcadia. He had asked us to work with him to further teach his dedicated inmates. In December, we gave him bibles in English and in Spanish as well as enrolling 19 men in our lessons. Yesterday he dropped in with his wife and told us how excited his men were to receive the lessons and the preview of the graduation bible he showed them. He also invited me to visit the men personally at the prison. Actually, John and I had visited Desoto prison many time years ago until they appointed a Muslim chaplain and lots of Christian ministry was cut off.

We want to thank all of you, our donors, for your commitment to Little Lambs. We know that all our lambs appreciate it, especially our 2nd Chance Ministry lambs. This has been a huge year for them with the purchase of their building and now adding a bakery to their home. We do appreciate all of you and pray that you are very blessed in the New Year!

Your servant,
Eileen Sala