Sentenced

Continued from page 9

"How was your day, pops? I had a very good day. No trouble."

"That's good, Al."

"I got all the floors spic and span. They really shined. Linda said they looked great. Then I helped Dave with the bread and it came out great. I helped with the cleanup when the bakery closed. There was two dozen filled left over."

"Al, why do you always do this?" Ken asked.

"Do what! Why do you have to be such a hard-ass? All I'm doing is telling you about my day."

"No Al, that's not all you're doing. It feels like there is more motivating you."

"There ain't nothing motivating me."

"Listen Al, you smother me with your desire to be the good little boy. I'm not here as a substitute for what you didn't have. You've got to desire adult relationships with deeper foundations. It will force you to grow. If you don't change, the first big storm is going to level everything you've built."

Day 60

"Hi Freddy. How's my numero uno bro' doing this evening? What do you say we go out, maybe do some shopping? I could get my hair done, maybe catch a movie?" Al said.

"Al, you know everyone's planning to go see that exhibit at Nazareth."

"Yeah, well that's them. What do you want? Wouldn't you rather try something a little more fun?"

"No Al. I want to be with Ken and the guys."

"Oh, up yours! I don't know why I try with you."

Day 77

The Tuesday night meeting is in progress.

"Come on Al, don't close down on us," Harold said.

"All right, I don't want to close down. I want to keep talking."

"Can you answer the question? Tell us why it always seems that you spend more energy on things directed away from Cephas and have such a hard time involving yourself with what is happening here?" Harold said.

"I don't know if I do that."

"C'mon Al, you got your own schedules for everything," Ken said. "Your clothes. Your hair. Your entertainment, meal times. Every day is a chore to get you to slow down and just be here. We shouldn't have to struggle so hard."

"Hey Al, do you think you're serious about livin'?" a man asked.

"Yes, I'm serious."

"Well, I've been out six years and one thing that was clear to me was that I had to cut all my plans loose and do my time in Cephas," the man said.

"I try that. It just doesn't work for me."

"Al, I'm married now, got a kid, a job. It's hard, but I'm happy and I have fun," the man said. "But if you had shown me six years ago my life now, I probably would have thrown up. I had to learn how to live. I had to learn how to live a life sentence out here in society."

"I know what you're sayin', but I don't know if I can really do that."

"Well you have to know, Al," Harold said. "We told you inside that Cephas isn't for everyone. It's for people with needs. Needs that we can fill. What we can't have is someone with one foot in and one foot headed toward the city. So if you're sincere about your life, then you think it over and let us know if you can cut the plans loose. Make sure you weigh up the costs, Al."

Day 79

"Ken, I don't think I can cut the plans. I got too many things I need to do."

"OK, Al. I'll take you to parole for the paperwork and we'll get you a bus ticket to New York."

Day 81

"Well, I guess this is it Ken."

"I guess so, Al. Remember to find some people of substance to spend your time with. And try to keep going to church. Maybe it will help keep things balanced."

"I will."

"You've come a long way. Use what you've learned."

"I will ... Man this is tougher than I thought. You may not believe this Ken, but I do love you, and I'll miss you guys."

"I believe you, Al," Ken said. "I believe you. I want you to make it. I want you to live."

"Me too," Al said. "I hope I made the right choice."

"So do I."

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