

THE BRIDGE MINISTRY



NEWS LETTER

SEPT 2026

ONE IN NINETY-NINE

Theme Scripture: Luke 15:4–7

INTRODUCTION

Bridge Ministry believes that every child matters to God, regardless of their past, mistakes, or circumstances. In Luke 15:4–7, Jesus tells the story of a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that is lost. When he finds it, he joyfully carries it home. This parable reveals the heart of God toward those who are forgotten, rejected, or overlooked by society.

At Bridge Ministry, this message inspires our work with children returning home from remand homes and correctional facilities. Our responsibility does not end when a child leaves a correctional institution. In many ways, that is where another important journey begins: restoration, acceptance, reconciliation, and reintegration into family and community.

THE STORY OF ONE IN NINETY-NINE

Imagine a child who has gone through a difficult season in life and found themselves in a correctional facility. During that period, the child has experienced consequences, separation from family, emotional pain, and the challenges of confinement. Through mentorship, counselling, and the Word of God, the child begins to understand the love of Christ and makes a decision to follow Him.

The child returns home with hope, believing that life can begin again. There is a new desire to change, a new understanding of responsibility, and a determination to live differently. However, the reception at home and in the community may not reflect the transformation taking place in the child's heart.

Some family members may still remember the past. Neighbours may continue to identify the child with the offence that led to their placement in a correctional facility. Friends may withdraw, while others may treat the child with suspicion and condemnation. The child who has already suffered the consequences of their mistakes may now face another painful experience: rejection by the very people whose acceptance and support they need to rebuild their lives.

This is where low self-esteem can begin. The child may question their worth, wonder whether change is possible, or believe that their past will forever define their future. Even after accepting Christ, they may struggle to convince others that they are no longer the same person they once were.

The question is not simply whether the child has changed; it is whether the family and society are willing to allow that change to be seen. Spiritual transformation is important, but rebuilding trust with people often takes time. Bridge Ministry therefore recognises the need for counselling, family engagement, mentorship, and community reconciliation.



A. Luke 15:4–7 — The Value of the One Who Is Lost

Jesus teaches that the shepherd searches for the one lost sheep and rejoices when he finds it. This passage is the foundation of the One in Ninety-Nine initiative. A child who has passed through a correctional facility must not be abandoned because of their past. Our mission is not to excuse wrongdoing but to ensure that wrongdoing does not become the permanent identity of a child.

B. 2 Corinthians 5:17 — A New Creation in Christ

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” This verse reminds us that a person's life can be transformed through Christ. When a child accepts Jesus and begins a new life, the church must support that journey through discipleship, encouragement, and accountability. The child should be helped to demonstrate transformation through responsible conduct.

C. Galatians 6:1–2 — Restoring with Gentleness

Paul instructs believers to restore those who have fallen in a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1). This calls Bridge Ministry to approach returning children with compassion rather than condemnation. Restoration does not mean ignoring the past or removing responsibility; it means helping a child take responsibility while providing guidance and support to make better choices.

D. Luke 19:1–10 — The Story of Zacchaeus

When Jesus encountered Zacchaeus, He did not reduce him to his reputation. The encounter led Zacchaeus to demonstrate repentance through concrete changes in his actions. This reminds us that a returning child needs opportunities to rebuild trust, make things right where possible, and show growth through consistent actions.

E. Ephesians 4:32 — Kindness, Compassion, and Forgiveness

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” This verse speaks to families and communities receiving children back from correctional facilities. Parents and guardians may also carry hurt, disappointment, or fear. Through counselling and biblical guidance, Bridge Ministry helps families work toward forgiveness, healthy communication, and renewed relationships.

F. Romans 15:7 — Accept One Another

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” This verse challenges the church and society to receive those seeking a new beginning. A child should not be permanently excluded from fellowship, family life, education, or opportunities for growth because of a past mistake.



THE ROLE OF BRIDGE MINISTRY IN RECONCILIATION

- 1. Counselling the child.** We provide guidance to help children work through shame, fear, rejection, and low self-esteem. Through individual counselling, mentorship, prayer, and Bible study, we remind them that their past does not have to determine their future. We also encourage responsibility, discipline, wise decision-making, and avoidance of harmful behaviour.
- 2. Counselling parents and guardians.** Parents may carry hurt, anger, disappointment, or fear about the child's return. Bridge Ministry creates opportunities for them to express their concerns, receive biblical encouragement, and learn how to support the child's progress while maintaining appropriate boundaries and accountability.
- 3. Bringing the child and family together.** Where appropriate and safe, we facilitate conversations that help each party express feelings, acknowledge past hurts, take responsibility where necessary, and agree on practical steps toward reconciliation. We do not force immediate forgiveness or pretend that everything is resolved; we work toward healing and restored communication.
- 4. Engaging the church and community.** Society may continue to judge a child long after a correctional period ends. Through biblical teaching and community engagement, we encourage people to replace permanent labels with responsible support. Children should be encouraged to grow rather than continually reminded of their worst moments.
- 5. Discipleship and continued mentorship.** Accepting Christ is an important beginning, but spiritual growth requires ongoing nurturing. We support children in developing their faith, building healthy relationships, participating in positive activities, and learning practical life skills. We also encourage education and vocational development to help each child work toward a stable future.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

The story of One in Ninety-Nine is the story of a child who needs more than a second chance. It is the story of a child who needs people willing to walk alongside them as they rebuild their life. When a child returns from a remand home or correctional facility, the family needs support, the community needs understanding, and the child needs an environment that encourages positive change.

Bridge Ministry calls upon parents, guardians, churches, community leaders, mentors, and well-wishers to become active participants in this ministry of reconciliation. Let us provide guidance without humiliation, accountability without permanent condemnation, and love without abandoning the responsibility to correct.

The ninety-nine are important, but so is the one who has wandered, stumbled, suffered, and is now trying to find the way home. At Bridge Ministry, we believe that reaching the child is only the beginning. Helping the child return home, restoring relationships, and preparing the community to receive them is part of the mission.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” — Luke 19:10 (KJV)

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