

Enter Jamarcus Huntley, aka "PREACH". He is a 25 year old native of my hometown of Charlotte, N.C. and he's on fire for the Lord and like us all have his fair share of personal struggles. His mother was killed at age 29. Her crack addiction caused him to be raised in group homes and become a ward of the state. Seven months ago his brother was gunned down in the streets of Charlotte. It's hard for him to balance his walk with God and deal with his struggles with the past. I have been working with him now for 8 months. He's an exceptional musical talent: he raps, sings and writes his own songs. The inmates can relate to his music because it has a positive message. His message is about God and where God has brought him from. He's the minister of music in the church here and the featured act at my Leaders Bread Leaders seminars. Preach is a man on a mission.

But sometimes he, too, allows the devil to get the best of him. Prison politics is the devil's most powerful tool. Inmates use the politics to their advantage. Preach, being strong-willed, made it clear that he was on "Christian Time." Which means he isn't a part of a "CAR." Cars are the titles of groups of inmates from one geographical area. These groups police and protect each other. For all practical purposes the concept of cars prevents a lot of inmates from warring. It keeps staff and inmates a lot safer because before someone assaults someone from a different car - the problem is brought to the attention on the inmates in that individual's respective car. And they will deal with the problem. Ordinarily the only rule is not to do anything that has an adverse effect on others. For example: if an inmate steals something from someone in another car he knows he'll have to face the consequences if he gets caught. Damar wasn't in a car so he was open prey. Anyone could do something to him. First, he was going to become a Muslim to get protection but that was against the spiritual roots of his family. So he tried to find the protection he needed in the church. Because I am from a state with over 400 inmates on the compound I was able to adopt him and bring him out of the field.

Inmates shun those of us who try to do the right thing because it casts more light on those doing the wrong thing. Preach say's what's on his mind, so it makes a lot of inmates hate on him. Those who don't hate are jealous of his talents. This morning I had a heart to heart talk with Preach about Leadership and Life in prison. We talked about sharing the stage - not hogging up the spotlight. I told him that people like him and me must give those not like us a chance to become like us. We are our brother's keeper. So he is going to assist me in teaching a music class that will teach other inmates how to do what he does. So I am preparing him for his calling to be a leader. It's been hard but today he finally understood my love and concern form him. He finally understood that you cannot let everyone know what you're thinking. He finally understood that Leaders Breed Leaders seminars that I do are more than a seminar - Breeding leaders is my way of life. It's what I do to please God and make this world a better place.

To hear Preach visit www.cedricdean.com and listen to the Our Common Ground Radio Show link on the home page.

More to come....