

Why This Youth Minister Spent a Night in Juvenile Detention Center

“Within the first few minutes of arriving at the detention center, I was issued a fresh set of clothing: Light gray sweatpants and matching sweatshirt, a blue T-shirt (which all new residents wear), white boxer shorts, white socks and slip on sandals. Everything I came in with was gone.”

Dan Wolgemuth, president of Youth for Christ, begins a reflection on his 26 hours spent incarcerated in a juvenile detention center in our recent interview on *When You Love a Prodigal* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

In recent years, under Dan’s leadership, YFC has transitioned into a ministry focused primarily on reaching and ministering to at-risk kids. This was a new environment for him—having grown up in a strong family with deep ties to ministry and YFC.

The needs of the inner city tugged strongly at Dan as he immersed himself in reaching high school students. So he decided he needed to become better acquainted. A day and night spent in juvenile detention center was just a “toe in the water,” but it did give him some understanding of what these kids experienced when those doors slammed shut behind them.

One of many people doing the immersive kind of work with youth and their families is Mike, a YFC staff member in Florida. He has been an important person in our family’s life—he is the one who introduced our prodigal to Jesus and has been an ongoing friend and encouragement to our son.

Tune into *When You Love a Prodigal* for my interview with Dan Wolgemuth. There is more to his story. {eo}