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Francis Chan Explains Why He Loves Prison Ministry; Says Prisoners Are Future Pastors and Leaders



(Photo: Catalyst Conference 2014/Bobby Russell)

Evangelist and church planter Francis Chan spoke on having a relationship with Jesus with less distractions during the Catalyst West conference at Mariners Church in Irvine, April 4, 2014.

By [Anugrah Kumar](#)

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Author and preacher Francis Chan, who recently encouraged hundreds of men inside the walls of Valley State Prison in California with a message of God's transformative power, shares in a new video why he loves and encourages others to participate in prison ministry.

"My interest in prison ministry started, I think, when I started to study the Word a little bit more deeply, and understood the types of people God typically chooses," says Chan, the former teaching pastor

of Cornerstone Community Church in Simi Valley, Calif., in a [video posted on the website of the Prison Fellowship](#).

"They are not the people the world would typically choose to do great things," adds Chan, the founder and Chancellor of Eternity Bible College and author of the best-selling book, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*.

"So I began going to the poor, began going overseas, and that's where my desire for prison ministry started," he explains, and adds, "You know, I bet you, that's where the leaders are going to come from."

Chan says he is a fan of Chuck Colson, who founded Prison Fellowship, in 1976. He says he has spoken in conferences with Colson.

Prison Fellowship seeks to equip local churches and trained volunteers "to spread the Gospel and nurture disciples behind prison walls, so that men and women become new creations in

Christ – not repeat offenders," as the ministry says on its website.

On Prison Fellowship's invitation, Chan visited and spoke to men at the prison in San Francisco on Easter weekend. "I thought what better way to spend my Easter weekend," he says, adding that these men may end up being "the future leaders of the Christian movement in America."

Jesus preached Good News to the poor, Chan underlines. "These guys need just a little bit of help; just a little bit of someone coming alongside," he adds.

"I was just walking down the street one day and a guy from a halfway house ... recognized me ... We started talking, and I started understanding his life and what it's like to try to get back into the world after seven years of being gone," Chan recalls, as quoted by a Prison Ministry blogger.

Another time, Chan saw a man with his wife and three kids. They had no job, and nowhere to live. But in this same man's eyes, he also saw divine joy and peace. So Chan helped him find an apartment and get a job.

Two years later, this man is a pastor, running Chan's ministry in San Francisco.

"We got a whole house that is all about discipleship and getting guys that are coming out of prison and giving them just that little chance, getting a job," Chan is quoted as saying. "I really believe that if we would just give some of these guys the opportunity, they're going to be amazing pastors and leaders."

Prison Fellowship says it prepares "Christian inmates to become leaders of their families, communities, and churches once they are released back into the community."

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