

# Be a rose, not a thorn

For some reason, more Christians answer the call to be a thorn in the flesh instead of a rose of encouragement. Yet everytime I encourage a fellow saint who is struggling under a burden, I get blessed, too.

Take, for instance, my relationship with Dotty Thur in Denver. Dotty is fiftyish, free and fun to know. A former beauty consultant with Saks Fifth Avenue, she is still in demand to talk to women's groups. When I first met her several years ago, she was a prospering businesswoman

BUCKSHOT

**JAMIE**

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with a chain of ice cream parlors. But, her partner stole the business and left her with the debts. It was a black time. When I was in Denver recently, we spent the evening together catching up.

"I determined to pay all the bills rather than go into bankruptcy," she told me over apples and cheese in her cramped apartment. "It's been hard, but I'm almost out of the woods."

I looked around at the tiny room, stacked high with Christian books. Dotty is now a book distributor, barely scratching out a living, but enjoying every minute of it.

"It was your letter which gave me strength to go on," she said. When I confessed I didn't even remember writing, she showed me the brief note. It had arrived the day she went to court. "God never *shuts* a door without *opening* another—even better. Don't compromise on what is right," I had written.

"Never underestimate the power of a letter to change a life, or encourage a person in distress," she concluded.

I thought about the millions of people who never get a single letter in a lifetime. I know one little mountain woman who kept for 30 years the one postcard she received. It was taped to the mirror in her bedroom.

Poor people, like prisoners, never get mail. Just think of what one little note of encouragement can mean.

So often, this is the tone of letters received by Crack in the Wall, the prison newsletter published by Logos International. If you think you'd like to write to a prisoner, ask about the pen pal program by writing to: Prison Ministry Coordinator, Mrs. Carol P. Heimbach, at Box 191, care of this newspaper.