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A Referral Ministry of ROCK

THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: *...but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7*

### Opening the Door to Disclosure

My best friend, outside of Fran, who is also in recovery with me, has encouraged me to write a piece on disclosure. I want to share broad enough though, so that anyone can relate, not just addicts, because not everyone who receives this newsletter is an addict. At least, I don't think so. Anyway, here it is, buddy!

Disclosure can be tricky. What do you tell? Who do you tell? How much do you tell? Does everyone need to hear all your gory details, or can some be spared and just receive the highlights? Do I give my spouse the same degree of disclosure I give my accountability partners? And what about my pastor? Does he need to know about my stuff? Won't he think less of me? All of these are important questions that need to be addressed, prayed through, and even grappled with, if we are to walk in the light as a son or daughter in God's family. And prayer should be the foundation for each opportunity for disclosure because not every time will we share the exact same thing with the same degree of revealing.

We all have our sins that we would just as soon remain secrets: thoughts, fears, actions, anxieties, etc. Some of these sins are more acceptable than others as far as people knowing about them. But some are the kind that no one in polite company would ever want to talk about. But is that what Father wants from us? Does He want us to live as if some sins are acceptable to discuss, but other we keep as secrets from one another and only confess to Him? As one who turned keeping secrets into an art form, for years I led a double life protecting my sin and my secrets. Not a good or righteous way to live! For a really, really long time, a big part of me wanted to scream to the world, "This is who I really am. Will anybody love me this way?" I think that's a fear many of us face. For an addict, it can be a core belief/question. If people know the real me, they won't love me. Father wants to set us free from this fear, from this lie, from this tool of the enemy to isolate us. James 5:16 says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Another friend in recovery once said, "When I want to be forgiven, I

confess to God; when I want to be healed, I confess to a brother.” Both are necessary for godly living.

In the beginning, I would confess about my “big” sin to my church leaders. I’m convinced they didn’t know what to do with me at the time. I was a guy who was passionate about following the Lord, but had this sin that had leeches onto me and I didn’t know how to get free. “Stop doing that,” and “You know that’s a sin,” were about the best advice I got. I was confident of their love and concern for me, but it wasn’t enough. They did everything they knew to do. Deliverance ministry was an option I tried, and that dealt with the compulsivity of my behaviors successfully for a time, but deliverance didn’t deal with the emotional ties I had to my sin, nor with the emotional scars I carried from the pain of early relationships in my life that drew me to medicate my pain with my sin. We know a lot more now than we knew then. I believe pastors today are better equipped by and large to help those in need in this way, and they should be sought out for help. Pastors carry a responsibility from the Lord to shepherd their people. How can those leaders adequately care for and cover their people in prayer, if they are not aware of their struggles? This place of disclosure is essential. Today, my pastor and elders, even my whole congregation (because of my testimony), know of my past and are very supportive of my recovery process and the ministry of Abba’s Delight.

With spouses, we especially want to be as open and honest about our dealings as we can possibly be, keeping in mind that our goal is always upholding our mate’s highest good. That will mean different guidelines in different situations. Particularly in the area of sexual integrity, if we have sinned, our spouses must be told, but it may not be in our spouse’s best interests or their highest good to be told the specific details of that sin. At the same time, we also need to avoid being intentionally vague or minimizing. Finding a proper balance takes working at communication with your spouse, determining what degree of disclosure and accountability is fitting for each couple. Some spouses insist they want details, and once they have them, they’re worse off—a relational learning opportunity. Other spouses know they don’t want details and are content knowing that their husbands are being accountable with close brothers in the Lord about guy/husband things. By and large, though, accountability should be with others of the same gender, and less with the spouse, when dealing with sexual matters.

With other family members such as siblings, parents, children and extended family, seeking the Lord for discretion and wisdom is essential. When it became apparent that I was going into ministry to help people with sexual brokenness and that my own testimony would be part of that ministry life, I changed my mind about disclosure to these family members. I had always assumed that I would keep my secret from them after I had told Fran, but when I realized the possibility that my other family members might hear from one of their acquaintances who might witness my testimony at a meeting they attended and say something to one in my family, I knew then I wouldn’t want family hearing my story in that way. So, Fran and I together first told our sons and then my

parents and brothers, sister, and their spouses. Not everyone, though, may have that luxury. We need to use discretion, as some family members may not exercise the same degree of discretion and feel they need to blab about town, or the church, someone else's story—particularly if the person whose story it is may not be ready for it to be disclosed beyond just a few.

If you are one who is in recovery or in a support group, and accountability is a regular part of your recovery program, I believe FULL disclosure is the only option. In my Saturday morning group (that just completed its 12<sup>th</sup> year), our accountability system is that once each guy does his check-in, feedback is given in the form of questions or comments from men who have dealt with the same issues or sins that were shared. These things are presented and responded to in such a way that we're not too vague about what has taken place, yet neither too specific that we trigger someone else into their addiction cycle who is hearing our check-in. If it happens, we call each other on it. Minimizing and blaming will be challenged as well. We don't try to fix each other, but we call each other on it when there's a less-than-forthcoming status offered, and we give feedback from our own experience, rather than approach our response from, "This is what you need to do..." As long as I give myself to the process whole-heartedly, I will find sobriety and healing in recovery.

Finally, we need to realize that honesty must start with ourselves and the Lord. We must be willing to be brutally honest with ourselves and in our confession of our sin to Him. This will most likely be a process as well. If we are used to minimizing our sin, believing lies that what we are doing is not sin or maybe not so bad, or blaming others for our condition, often it will be difficult to see our own depravity which will keep us from being totally honest with the Lord. I remember blaming specific other people for some of my problems, and not being willing to accept responsibility for my own part in them, and in turn not being able to confess those sins to the Lord because I didn't see them as sins--until the Holy Spirit revealed them to me. Once I saw the reality of those situations, I was able to recognize my own sin and make those confessions. As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, He provides those opportunities for us to come clean and be healed step-by-step.

### **Upcoming Ministry Meetings**

Family & Friends Support Group: Tuesday, July 31, 2012; Tuesday, August 14, 2012;  
Tuesday, August 28, 2012

Overcomers Support Group: Thursday, August 9, 2012; Thursday, August 23, 2012

### **Responses From You**

From a brother in Louisville: Hi my brother. I think this is the article I responded to the last time I wrote to you. It's still just as powerful. Us in the "straight" Christian community still don't get it when it comes to relating to or helping those with same sex attraction. You have been my mentor for so many years, and I am still in awe of you, and your struggles have never been an issue with us. Keep up the faith and the good works. I am so proud of you.

From an Exodus ministry leader in CA: Thanks so much for resending your testimony in your newsletter. I don't recall ever reading it, and it is great!

### **Next Month Guest Writer**

Next month there will be a guest writer for the newsletter who will share some of his thoughts with us. I am excited to present this brother to you. Stay tuned!

### **Ongoing Prayer Requests**

Our Overcomers Group has grown over the last few months, even though we have lost a couple of members as well. Our growth is answered prayer. Please continue to pray that those who Father would bring us will hear His voice to contact the ministry.

As well, our Family & Friends Group has experienced growth, which is more answered prayer. There is still room for continued expansion, so please continue to pray.

Another report of answered prayer is in our desire to add to our Board of Directors. I would like to have 10 members, and we have filled one of those spots. Currently, we have 7. If you would like to serve on our Board, or know of someone who has a heart for seeing God's people set free, please contact me.

Our website is still in flux. Between my day job, ministry meetings and family, I can't seem to find the time to write the pieces I need to have placed on the site. Please pray for time, wisdom and speed to write those pieces. Thank you.

If you do not wish to receive the Abba's Delight Ministry Newsletter any longer, please let me know. If you do wish to continue to receive it, please be certain to put our email address in your address book, so that this mailing does not go to your spam, and report to your carrier. Thank you.

***Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24, 25***