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An Exodus International Member Ministry

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A Referral Ministry of ROCK

THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: *Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions...But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God...Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother's way...Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those who are without strength and not just please ourselves....Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you to the glory of God. Romans 14:1,10,13; 15:1,5-7.*

This month's piece is a reprint from Abba's Delight's October 2009 newsletter. Obviously three more years have gone by, so I am nearing my 20th anniversary of the start of my recovery and healing process. I've chosen different meditation passages above than I had used the first go around. They speak closer to my perspective today. I hope you enjoy this sharing, and are blessed by it.

So, Who Have You Shot Lately?

It is almost seventeen years now since I decided that I would no longer engage in homosexual sin. I was miserable in the life I was leading, and quite tired of the lies and secrecy I had let become such a major part of my life. My conscience couldn't take anymore, my spirit was sorely wounded, and my soul was in great turmoil. I had made that decision before—many times; even vowed to Father that the last time would be the last time. I was tired of saying it, and I just knew He was tired of hearing it.

But then, it finally took. It wasn't until several years later that I came to realize why that last time actually **was** the last time. On the way home from a business trip where I had acted out yet again, with my ritualized cry-out to the Lord to forgive me and my "take this away" plea, I heard Father's response to my cry as He said, "Daniel, it's time to tell Fran." Well, that certainly wasn't what I expected to hear!!!! A well-aimed lightning bolt would have been more welcomed. At the time, I thought, "What could being honest and truthful have to do with leaving sin behind?" Why couldn't I just stop? Why did anyone have to know about the shameful things I'd been giving myself to for so many years?

But the fact is, I couldn't begin to get the liberating healing I needed until I was willing to confess my sin, and receive intercessory prayer for my condition, and that meant telling people, not just God. (Jas.5:16)

Years before, I had chosen to take the occasional step to be vulnerable with some men whom I respected spiritually, and to share my sexual history. It didn't always go so well. Most times, I was left feeling empty, uncared for, not encouraged, as if they didn't know what to do with someone like me. I found that not everyone I entrusted with this side of me was enthused with the idea of hearing about someone's messed up sexual identity and exploits. It wasn't that I spilled revealing details; it was more that men (especially) just didn't talk about sexual sin much then. Sometimes, it seemed like the ones I shared with were not able to get away far enough and fast enough, and once again I would feel abandoned. Unfortunately, we haven't come a whole lot farther in some respects. Even in "accountability groups," much of what is shared is superficial, the conversation is fumbled when it comes to sexual integrity matters, and root issues are really not resolved. Often times, men will just out and out lie when it comes to their sexual integrity for fear of being what I'll call "Phariseed".

Today, there are still churches that will not address sexual addiction and/or homosexuality from the pulpit in any kind of way that is redemptive to those who are suffering in silence. Kyle Foster of Mastering Life Ministries, states, "In the average pew of 15 people, 5 will have been sexually abused, 2 will have gender identity confusion/homosexual orientation, 3 will struggle with pornography." I first heard these statistics in 2003, and I'm not certain how old they were at the time. I can only imagine how much higher those figures are now in 2009.

Pastors are usually not afraid to offer general condemnation of such behavior, but addressing these matters as an actual problem in the lives of their congregants is rare. Many pastors will not publicly address Internet porn issues with their congregations, as in many instances the topic may hit too close to home.

Fortunately, after several years of recovery and healing from the Lord, most of whatever concerns I had in the past about sharing my sexual history have been alleviated. The more comfortable I have become telling my story, the easier it has become handling the responses of people who hear--- whatever they may be. Also, Father has blessed me with numerous men and women in my life who love and support me, and the direction the Lord has taken me, including my pastor and his wife, as well as my church family. But I consider myself blessed in that respect. Many are not so fortunate.

Many men and women who have already come out of or are attempting to leave homosexuality do not have the luxury of being members of congregations where they feel safe sharing their histories with the pastor, let alone others in the congregation with whom they may become friends. It is not uncommon to hear tales of church-going, Bible-believing men and women of God spouting tired clichés such as, "There are no homos in our church," or "God hates fags!" or "God tells us to love the sinner, but hate the sin." The sad fact is that most Christians have not known how to love the homosexual sinner in a way that will turn their lives to the Lord. And those who are already believers, who desire to leave homosexuality behind, often fear the ramifications of sharing their story. I personally have met ones over the years who were asked to leave churches they were a part of when it became known that they were homosexual strugglers.

Singling out their homosexuality is not the answer. These wounded ones need care, compassion and understanding. We can't keep shooting our wounded ones over and over again. These are individual souls in need of a Savior and Healer just like the liar, the swindler, or the thief. None is any worse than the next. Homosexual strugglers in our midst need to be included and incorporated into our church families. They need to be invited to dinner in our homes, to hang out at the malls or to go for coffee. They need to build relationships, getting to know fellow believers, and in the process have modeled for them Father's intended masculinity and femininity by brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ who are healthy and mature. They need the exact same things every one of Father's children needs to be influenced toward the Lord, and for others to forget about the fact that they struggle with

homosexuality. That is not who they are. Their homosexual sin does not define them, or their worth to Father's kingdom purposes.

One problem here, though, is that this concept often presents uncomfortability for those who do not struggle with this same sin. Homosexual strugglers need to be able to come into a church family and know no one will roll their eyes at them when they sit next to someone, or speak to someone. The male overcomer needs to be free to be himself, even if that includes his as-of-yet unchanged feminine mannerisms, or lispy, soft voice, or less than John Wayne saunter. The woman who yet displays masculine appearance, dress and mannerisms needs to know that she is loved and accepted for who she is in Christ, not what she looks like or how she acts. Overcomers need to know we are working to get past ourselves and listen for the Spirit's direction to love them, encourage them, and bless them. They need to know they are safe in our congregations from being shot and wounded again by their well-meaning but missing-the-mark brothers and sisters. We need to follow Jesus' example and serve those who need His saving grace. We need to extend loving support to them so they can grow in Him. And we need to pray consistently that Father will restore what the enemy has stolen from these casualties of life who will turn into overcomers because of the prayers of the saints who love them as they cooperate with God's plan for their lives.

Let's examine ourselves to see if we are part of Father's redemptive plan, or if we are among those who have their guns drawn, ready to fire on the already wounded.

Upcoming Ministry Meetings

Overcomers Support Group: Thursday, October 4, 2012; Thursday, October 18, 2012

Family & Friends Support Group: Tuesday, October 9, 2012; Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Responses From You

From a brother in China: Thank you for the newsletter. It has been an encouragement to me...I want to get close to God and serve Him.

From a brother in Louisville directed to me: Daniel Mingo "cracks the whip." I have a hard time envisioning that. And to Brandon, whose testimony was our featured article last month: Brother, we all live out 'our own process.' Everyone has sinned and fallen short of what God intended for us. The things we give ourselves to are the things that will dominate our lives, be it good or bad. I encourage you to choose scripture that speaks to you and put it where you see it daily. I like Psalm 1 and I have it above my computer screen where I see it all the time. Stay in a fellowship group where you can share real life with other believers and press on. Expect God to do great things in your life and leave your past in the past. Look to the Son (Jesus) and let your shadow remain behind you. Zephaniah 3:17.

End of Year Contributions

Please give some prayerful consideration to supporting Abba's Delight financially, as we near the end of 2012. Your tax-deductible contributions to our ministry benefit the work Father has called us to do in helping set free those who are bound by unwanted same sex attractions, and those whose lives have been negatively impacted by homosexuality. Thank you again, to those of you who do contribute faithfully. Contributions may be sent to the ministry P O Box listed at the top of the Newsletter. Thank you for your willingness to hear from the Lord in this way. Be blessed.

If you do not wish to receive the Abba's Delight Ministry Newsletter any longer, please let me know. If you do wish too 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