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An Exodus International Member Ministry

Ministry Newsletter May 2012
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A Referral Ministry of ROCK

THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: *But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body (of Christ), just as He desired.....that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 1Corinthians 12:18, 25-27*

Killing the Lone Ranger!

If you've been around for a while receiving our monthly newsletters, you may remember me mentioning the support group I attend every week (for the last 12 years) for my own ongoing recovery from sexual addiction. There have been a few times that those meetings have been a source of inspiration for these newsletters. And so was yesterday's meeting.

In our support group, we use a curriculum called "Faithful and True" by Mark Laaser. At our own pace, we progress through a series of units, all of which teach us about sexual purity and overcoming our addictions from a Biblical perspective. Often, in these units, short stories are written about individuals (I don't know if they're fictional or not, but they sure seem to apply to many of our lives in the group) who find themselves trapped in their addictions.

Yesterday's story was about a man named Ken who had stopped his sexual acting out, was involved in a support group, maintained his contact with a sponsor, and was practicing honesty in his relationships. Then he got bored with the recovery process after about 6 months, and decided that since his recovery was going so well, he must be healed. He decided he didn't need the group, his sponsor, or meetings anymore. But then Ken began slowly to slip back into his old habits. Later, when his wife noticed that he was re-engaging one of his old trigger behaviors, he got angry and found himself at a massage parlor. The story ended there. And our discussion began.

During our discussion, the leader asked the men gathered what we saw about Ken's situation. There were several answers and discussion around them. One of the answers was that when Ken began having difficulties again, and at this point he was not engaging in any acting-out behaviors, he never reached out to someone to be accountable about his thoughts, feelings, actions, etc.; he made no confessions to his wife; he kept everything inside, isolating himself from all avenues of aide, and tried to deal with it all

on his own. He had forgotten that if he were able to overcome his sin completely on his own efforts without help, he would have done so years ago. He chose to be a lone ranger, and he was losing the battle again because he would not seek help. We call the character The Lone Ranger, but even he had Tonto.

Then the discussion turned to how fortunate we are that we have a group like this to be able to process the ins and outs of our lives with one another as it relates to our sin, and that we know from personal experience exactly what each other is talking about because each of us has been there. From there, it was brought up that even though we are fortunate to have a group like this to help us, it was probably originally designed by our heavenly Father that the Body of Christ, the local church, be the context in which this kind of overcoming takes place.

It was submitted that the church-at-large has widely missed the mark in dealing with sexual sin within the congregations. Some congregations deal with sexual issues openly from the pulpit while keeping the confidentiality of particular situations intact, and I would expect that those are the congregations that are the healthiest ones. A congregation being open to discuss such delicate matters must come from the pulpit and work its way down, but that gets tricky. In some situations, that would necessitate that pastors and other church leaders have to look at their own purity issues—something some of them are not willing to do, so that shuts down the work of restoration. Other congregations have regulations where the pastor is hindered by the will and instructions of a board of deacons or directors. And again, if they are unwilling to allow their pastors to engage in discussions of sexual matters from the pulpit, any willing pastor is still prohibited.

Another point that was brought up in our discussions was that some pastors or leaders fear that if they discuss their own sexual temptations or failings, they would lose their positions, be asked to step down for a time of repentance, healing and restoration, or even be fired on the spot. This fear is very real for them.

Several years ago, a man came to our ministry with a heightened need in his mind for confidentiality to help overcome his same-sex attractions. He was very well known in his congregation, not on staff, but involved in several different ministries and widely respected. He had a very recognizable name, and did not want it to be known that he was a struggler for fear that he would be asked to step down from the work he was successfully doing in the church and outside it. He was also doing very well in his overcoming process already, and had provided some disclosure to his wife at that time. By policy, I strongly recommend that every participant include his pastor, or someone on the pastoral staff, in his circle of those who know his besetting sins. But, in this case, I could certainly understand why he felt as he did, and he continued to refuse to do so whenever the topic came up. We continued meeting bi-weekly for discipling in this area, and when he had come as far as he could without further disclosure to the pastoral staff; we parted ways in good standing with each other. By that time, he was well on his way

to a full recovery, but having the freedom to make that confession to his pastor would have been his icing on the cake. He even called me out of the blue about 6 months later to let me know that he was still doing well.

Just as an aside, the reason I think it's essential that someone who is working to overcome a besetting sin such as homosexuality or sexual addiction share their struggle with their pastor is that a pastor is charged with spiritual oversight for the congregation. It is important for the pastoral team to know such things for the purposes of prayer, warfare and spiritual covering for these type situations. Dealing with the enemies necessitates knowing who the enemies are.

So, then, how do we get to the point where the Body of Christ is a safe place to disclose and confess our sins? Prayer is the beginning. We need to pray for our leaders and our congregations that disclosure, confession, and repentance will be commonplace and safe, but done with the Lord's wisdom. Leaders who are in sin must look at their own lives and situations and determine if their positions are more important than their faithfulness to the One who called them to those positions. There are many groups and chapters of ministries which specifically deal with those overcoming besetting sins springing up all over the country. Confidentiality is often a cornerstone to these type ministries. As the Body of Christ, we need to stop shooting our wounded and begin to let Father's healing flow. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. There are reasons and stories behind each life of secret sin that need to be brought into the light. Finally, we need to pray that Father will direct those in need to safe places in the Body of Christ, even if that means moving to a new congregation who will help in your healing process.

I have said for years that we have not even begun to scratch the surface of realizing and maintaining the Body of Christ in the way that Jesus meant for us to do when he ascended to the Father. Many changes have come to the Body of Christ at-large in my lifetime; I pray I see further significant ones before I'm called home. In the early church, Christians were spoken of thusly, "See how they love one another!" Isn't time for our world to be treated to that same revelation?

Upcoming Ministry Meetings

Overcomers Support Group: Thursday, May 31, 2012; Thursday, June 14, 2012; Thursday, June 28, 2012 CANCELLED

Family & Friends Support Group: Tuesday, June 5, 2012; Tuesday, June 19, 2012

Responses From You

From a Louisville ministry supporter: Daniel, We just studied the story of Ruth and Naomi, and your newsletter reminded me again that we don't know what God has in store for us and what the future may hold. We simply have to keep the faith that His ways are greater than our own and press on. Blessings.

From one of Abba's Delight ministry participants: __Great newsletter! The part about the wedding! I didn't realize that the lady had never been married before, and she was over 60. What a happy story.

From a ministry leader in Cincinnati: Thank you Daniel. I enjoyed reading this very much. Wonderful poignant story about the wedding! Made me feel a touch of renewed hope for myself, an old bachelor!

Ongoing Prayer Requests

Please pray for our Overcomers Support Group, that each one of them will pursue his relationship with Jesus as fiercely as he knows how, that each will continue to become more perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus as he learns obedience to the King, and that lasting changes from the inside out will bear fruit in his life, leading other men to Him.

Please ask the Lord to bring new participants to the Overcomers Support Group, who will be searching for the Lord to bring them wholeness and purity.

Please pray for our Family & Friends Support Group members to receive wisdom from Father in learning how to share His love with their loved ones whose lives have been impacted by homosexuality. **Please pray for those who would benefit from attending this support group, but who are letting themselves be kept out by pride, shame, and the feeling that their situation is hopeless. These are obstacles that can be overcome with the help of the Lord and others in the group who are receiving their healing from Him.**

Please pray for our search to add new Board Members to Abba's Delight. If you, or anyone you know, would be willing to serve on our Board, please contact me to inquire about serving. Meetings are scheduled once every quarter.

Please pray for the ongoing work of developing our website. Some of it is complete, but we still have a long way to go. Ask the Lord to give me the time, wisdom and speed to write the pieces that still need to be added.

Upcoming Conferences

Exodus International Freedom Conference *I will be presenting a workshop on
June 27-June 30, 2012 sexual purity on Saturday, 6/30
Northwestern College (Minneapolis, MN)
Contact Info: 888-264-0877

Email: conference@exodusinternational.org

Hope Gathering 2012 is a one-day seminar designed to give truthful, grace-filled insight on Gender Identity Disorder. Speakers are: Dr. Marc Dillworth who is a licensed Psychotherapist who specializes in the treatment of GID in children and adolescents; Denise Shick, founder of Help 4 Families, and author of *My Daddy's Secret* and *When Hope Seems Lost*; Walt Heyer, author of *Trading My Sorrows, Perfected With Love*, and his newest release *Paper Genders*. This event will include workshops and testimonies. The conference will be held on July 28, 2012 in Marietta, GA. For more details, go to www.help4families.com.

Financial Support Update

We are still raising monthly support so that Abba's Delight can become a full-time ministry. We are still \$2750 short of our monthly goal. Once we reach that, I can resign from my day job and devote my week days full-time to the work of this ministry. Please seek the Lord to see if Abba's Delight may fit into your sacrificial giving. 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