

“In the Heart of the Community with the Community at Heart”



March 2011



The Biblical Counselor's Corner

Getting Past the Past

"I just can't seem to forget about the past. The things that have happened to me and the things I have done seem to linger over me, even control me. How do I 'get over it' and move on?"

Last month we learned that our culture is obsessed with the past. The unbelieving world and many believers too, give far too much credence to the past. We learned that in the Bible the past is put in its proper perspective: it may influence us but it must not determine us. In other words, the past is something, but it is not everything. Because of our sinfulness (*Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:17-23; Romans 7:17-25*) we struggle to properly interpret our past. Jesus, Joseph, Peter and the rest of scripture teach that we must "know God into our personal experiences, not know God from our personal experiences." (*Genesis 50:15-21; 1 Peter 2:23*) The first step in biblically handling the past is to have a "Biblical Theology of Depravity." In other words we must understand that our sinfulness impacts our interpretation of our past. We will not see our past as God intends us to see if we are not conscious of our sinful tendency to maximize the pain and suffering, and the sinful tendency to minimize our own sinfulness, and minimize God's sovereign and loving involvement (*Romans 8:28*). Even when we have been innocently victimized in the past, we must be wary of the sinful tendency of the human heart to misinterpret what has happened. More than anything, last month we learned that the core issue of life is worship, not pain or suffering. What or who I worship determines my response to what happens to me, and it is the RESPONSES to life that reveal my true personhood and character. C. S. Lewis said, "The human heart is an idol factory." When I am disappointed, hurt, or victimized, it is my response to those situations that reveals what or who I am truly worshipping. It reveals what or who I truly want or value. **To overcome the past, we must first of all realize that life is ultimately about worship, not about hurt, pain, or suffering.** I say this without belittling or minimizing the hurt, pain, and suffering.

The Bible presents four facts about the past. First of all, **the past is unavoidable**. Everyone has a past. Everyone in the Bible had a past: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Paul, etc. Some pasts are recorded as bad (*2 Corinthians 11*) and some are recorded as good (*Philippians 1:3*). To some degree, everyone carries their past with them. The past does have some influence. **But the key is that the past is not the problem; the problem is what we do with the past.** Once again it is our response to the past that is the ultimate problem to overcome, not the past experiences themselves, for everyone has a past. And our responses reveal our worship, which is the ultimate key issue. Secondly, the Bible teaches that **memories of the past are selective**. Part of being human is that each person is his own interpreter. We each shape and give our own meaning to our past. *Numbers 11* is instructive here. The people of Israel came out of 400 years of severe bondage and oppression under Egypt. God was leading them every step of the way, and providing for their every need on their journey to the beautiful land of Israel. Verse five says “*We remember* the free fish, melons, cucumbers, leeks, onions, and garlic we had in Egypt but now we have lost our appetite and all we have to eat is this manna.” They were waxing elegant about the past. They were romanticizing about the past. They were only remembering the “good,” while totally ignoring the pain and suffering and bondage as slaves! See how the sinful human heart works! Why would they do this? Verse 4 says “The rabble among them had greedy *desires* and the sons of Israel wept.” The heart was the problem! Some had an inordinate, or unbalanced, greedy desire and this caused them to worship comfort, luxury and ease rather than being thankful for God’s liberation from Egypt and the food that He was providing. **Their memories of the past were selective based on what they wanted in the present.** Because we are sinners, our present, current desires and goals shape how we remember the past. It was lust and greed that shaped Israel’s memory of life in Egypt. And notice in verse 10 that God was angry with the people for remembering incorrectly. Their incorrect remembering led to ingratitude! To overcome the past, we must work very hard to remember accurately and not allow our current desires to slant the past to our advantage, thus excusing our responsibilities or creating so-called reasons to shift blame for today’s struggles, which in turn can lead to discouragement, depression, and even despair. The Scriptures say “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,” and “Rejoice in the Lord always,” and “Do not be anxious but present your requests to God with thanksgiving.”

Lord willing, next month we will see that the past is a theological problem and the past is correctly handled by remembering in a biblical way. Until then, “Forget what is behind and press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus!”



11005 Foster Rd.
Norwalk, CA 90650

www.gracelive.com

Son Harvest Vacation Bible School COUNTY FAIR

June 29 - July 3
6:30-8:00pm
Register early
with the purple insert!

MARCH 2011 MONTHLY EVENT CALENDAR

The ROCK

Raising Our Children
for the King -
Children's Ministries on
Wednesday evenings at
6:30 pm - Kidmo room
**COME HEAR
MORE ABOUT
MISSIONS.**

College/Young Adult

Small Group

March 5th & 19th

7:30 - 9:00 pm

Room: 6B

DRIVEN NEWS

Our DRIVEN youth
ministries meet
Wednesday evenings
at 6:30 pm in the
Fellowship
Hall. All youth are
welcome to attend.
Please see the
Youth Page for more
details.

MOMENTUM

2011

July 12-17

Johnstown, PA

WOMEN OF GRACE

*Join the Women of
Grace for their March
8th meeting at
6:30pm in room 6B
(Lesson: Ch. 15 -
Tempting Questions)
*Plan to attend the
Women of Grace
District Rally - May 14.

Ladies Ministries
Plan to come to our
Bingo/Service Project
Night on March 12
(more details on back).
See you there!

LADIES' NIGHT OUT

WHEN: MARCH 12, 2011

WHAT: SOUP/SALAD, BINGO, SERVICE PROJECT

WHERE: ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM

TIME: 5:00PM

WE WILL BE DOING A SERVICE PROJECT FOR THE NURSES NEXT DOOR AT VILLA ELENA. WHEN YOU RSVP WE WILL LET YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING OR YOU CAN DONATE \$1.

IF YOUR LAST NAME STARTS WITH AN A-M PLEASE BRING A SOUP AND IF YOUR LAST NAME STARTS WITH A N-Z PLEASE BRING A SALAD.

WE WILL ALSO BE PLAYING BINGO SO BE PREPARED FOR FUN!!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS! EVERYONE WHO BRINGS A FRIEND FROM NOW UNTIL SUMMER TIME WILL GET ENTERED INTO A DRAWING IN THE SUMMER FOR A DIGITAL PHOTO FRAME. THEY MUST BE A NEW FIRST TIME FRIEND.

PLEASE RSVP TO JOSIE RAMIREZ OR HEATHER REYNAGA.

MISSION NEWS...

WAYNE & ELLEN PATTON

BRAZIL MINISTRY UPDATE

Praise God!

*My friend, Joe, was able to bring me a new computer.

*Plans for the Cotijuba ministry seem to be coming together.

*Two of the men we are working with are catching their own visions and plans for the Island of Cotijuba.

Prayer Request

*Pray for the Holy Spirit to raise up leaders to work with us to develop teams and ministries at Cotijuba and beyond.

*Major youth outreach on March 18 and 19th.

*Pray with us as we rework our ministry plans to be approved by the GBIM Board.

*Pray for our storying ministry both here in Brazil and as we prepare for home ministries.

*Pray that the Lord will raise up workers for the River Ministry. This would be youth, men and families to take the Gospel to the Island of Cotijuba and beyond.

*Pray for our health and not to contract dengue fever as we visit river communities.

*Pray for our protection from thieves and accidents as we travel around.

*Pray for us as we prepare plans and arrangements for home ministries in June - December of this year.

*Pray for Ellen's upcoming eye surgery in June.

From PATTON'S EMAIL

PATTY MORRIS

FRANCE MINISTRY UPDATE

Pray for Mathilde who just borrowed the copy of the new French edition of "More than a Carpenter" that I had given to her dad. You might ask why I still minister in an established church. There are several reasons. The most crucial to me is that in much of my work as administrator for our Europe

missionary team I have to take initiative and just know what needs to be done and do it without much input. I have my office in my home and have to be highly motivated to do my work. Being in a setting where there is some structure is good for me, especially as a single. I also have a lot to contribute to a growing church. Some of the responsibilities I have are co-leading a house group, lead prayer meetings every other Wednesday night (collective prayer is essential!), participate in a women's Bible study (both to encourage Lori Varak but also to put in "my two centimes worth" because I feel I can share from my years of walking with the Lord), encourage missions and informally disciple several women. **(Copies of her new prayer letter are out in the foyer. Pick one up today!)**

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From PATTY'S EMAIL

CECIL & DEBBIE O'DELL

TOKYO MINISTRY UPDATE

It has been several months ago that I received an e-mail from Dorothy & Woody Talbert, in Columbus Ohio. Dorothy shared with me that she had befriended a Japan lady during her walks in a near by park. I sent Dorothy some bi-lingual tools to help her share the Gospel with Setsuko. The seeds that Dorothy carefully planted began to grow and she shared with me that Setsuko chose to believe in Jesus and follow him last Summer.

Please pray for Dorothy as she continues to meet with Setsuko to help her become a strong follower and witness of Christ. Please pray for Setsuko as she prepares to return to Japan as a new believer.

From O'DELLS EMAIL

DRIVEN 2011

youth ministries

WE.CARE.2011

With two We Care projects behind us already, it is neat to look back and see the relationships that are being built and how God is moving on Lefloss Avenue. Don't miss out on the things of God! Make plans to be apart of the next We Care Project on Saturday, March 12th from 10:00a to 11:00a. Bring a package of 2, 9volt batteries, with you to the outreach.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO BOUGHT VALENTINE COOKIES AND GREAT JOB TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO SOLD EXTRA COOKIES ON YOUR OWN. WE WERE ABLE TO SELL 200 COOKIES AND RAISED \$1,000 TOWARDS MOMENTUM YOUTH CONFERENCE.

Fundraiser Dinner

Come join us on Monday, March 14th for a Fundraiser Dinner. Location of the restaurant will be announced at the beginning of March. Come support the DRIVEN Youth and enjoy a time of fellowship.



Important Reminder that Momentum Commitment Letters are due by Wednesday, March 2 and they need to be signed and dated by both student and parents. Also, Sunday, March 20th is the first financial deadline. You need to have \$400 deposited into your account in order for us to purchase the airline tickets.

Month @ A Glance

Girl's Discipleship Group

7:00pm - 8:00pm
Every Tuesday Night

DRIVEN Wednesday

6:30pm - 8:00pm
Every Wednesday Night

Worship Team Practice

8:00pm - 9:00pm
Every Wednesday Night

Momentum Commitment Deadline

Wednesday, March 2nd

DRIVEN Leadership Team

4:00pm - 6:00pm
Sunday, March 6th

"We Care" Outreach

10:00am-11:00am
Saturday, March 12th

Dinner Night Out Fundraiser

Monday, March 14th
Location: TBD

Momentum Deposit Deadline

\$400.00
Sunday, March 20th

Communion

5:00p - 6:30p
Sunday, March 27th

Work Projects

If you have work projects that some of our youth can do, please make mention on the tear off tab in the bulletin or contact Timothy.

MARCH 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		01 Madison Kimsey 7:00p Girls' Discipleship 7:00p Ladies' study – teacher's lounge	02 Momentum commitment letter due today FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	03	04 7:00p Parenting Bible Study – Conf. Room	05 Matthew Hurtado 7:30 – 9:00p College/ Young Adult – 6B
06 Don & Susan Klements 9a Children's Choir 4-6p DRIVEN Leadership 5p Worship Comm.	07 Cassandra Goode Ron & Joyce Morrow	08 6:30p Women of Grace – 6B 7:00p Girls' Discipleship	09 Shirley Bean SHEPHERD'S CONF. FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	10 SHEPHERD'S CONF.	11 Scott Perkins SHEPHERD'S CONF. 10a Evang./Missions Comm. Mtg.	12 SHEPHERD'S CONF. 10m WE CARE Saturday (9v batteries) 5p Ladies' Night Out -6B (Bingo/Service Project)
13 Leticia Posada 9a Children's Choir 5p CE Commission & Fellowship Comm.	14	15 7:00p Girls' Discipleship 7:00p Ladies' study – teacher's lounge 7:00p Elders	16 Glenna Bowlin FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	17	18 Ruth Hurtado	19 Jonathan Schlatter Robert Kimsey Glenn & Shirley Bean 8:00a Church Work Day 7:30 – 9:00p College/ Young Adult – 6B
20 Ruben Gonzalez Erwin & Lois South 9a Children's Choir Momentum deadline - \$400 due 3:30p Care Comm. 7:00p Deacon Board	21 Brittni Muir Janine Lansing	22 7:00p Girls' Discipleship	23 FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	24	25 Katlynn Janssen	26
27 9a Children's Choir 5:00p COMMUNION	28	29 Martin Reynaga Michael Lansing 7:00p Girls' Discipleship	30 Victor Pearce FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	31		