



A Measure of Grace

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WGA Services Are Free? Why? Part 2

By Mary Heathman

Last month, I introduced the question, “Why are WGA’s services provided free of charge?” This month, I hope to answer that question and clarify WGA’s approach and philosophy of ministry.



You may remember my comment in the first article, that in the organizational beginnings of WGA, just as I was thinking through a plan for charging for counseling and group participation, my heart was heavy and I felt pressure in my chest. Then I did what I always do under such stress—

I cried! And in the midst of the tears, I heard the song on

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wga
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the radio as if it had been turned up louder all of a sudden:

*Freely, freely, you have received;
Freely, freely, give.*

*Go in my name, and because you
believe,
Others will know that I live.*

(*Freely, Freely*, Carol Owens, ©
1972, Bud John Songs, Inc.
Matthew 10:8).

I had my answer and was relieved, and grateful. I also felt that it would be good to get confirmation before I charged on ahead. In this month's article, I will share the results of that search for confirmation. I will give more biblical references and the rationale behind WGA's decision to offer its services to group members without charge.

In a search of the Scriptures, I found good reasons for charging for ministry services. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul makes assumptions like: a soldier is to be paid, an orchard worker should receive some of its fruit to eat, and the shepherd who feeds the flock should also drink of the milk of the flock. The same passage refers to the law of Moses, "Thou shalt not

muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn." Paul goes on to infer that he and Barnabas, by virtue of their work among the people, have a right to receive provision from them (1Cor. 9:6-1).

These passages gave me pause—it seemed Scripture endorsed a servant earning a wage from those he served. But I read a bit further and found the passages that matched my heart's response to the song on the radio:

***WGA offers its
services free of
charge because
we want the
good news
of God's
provision to
come without
the distraction
that payment
for services
might bring.***

1Corinthians 9:12,15
"If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? ... But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ."

WGA offers its services free of charge because we want the good news of God's

provision to come without the distraction that payment for services might bring. We do not want the message of God's grace and truth to be hindered—people might think they are buying it from us rather than receiving the Lord's provision as a gift!

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Struggle

By Shannon Wise

Struggle

Sometimes his hips shift
Sometimes his lips lisp
He's drawn to rainbow colors
And Abercrombie and Fitch

He enjoys a good sale
Before a stellar Broadway tale
His foo-foo drink of choice
A good stiff ginger ale

He has a subscription to "Details"
And "People weekly" too
But when it comes to reading material
Don't mess with his "GQ"

Cher, Madonna and Britney
He agrees they're pretty grand
When he's cruising down the highway
It's got to be Barbra Streisand

He rushes home every other Thursday
From his hairdresser, Bobee's place
Gets into his jammies
For a must-see "Will & Grace"

He's not exactly burly
Certainly not built like "Shaq"
He tries to work out daily
But he's kind of a... "Just Jack"

His wrists are often bent
Some say this gives him away
But there's really no secret here
Cuz, uh huh, okay, he's not gay

I recently saw this poem at an event my church sponsors called Entersec-tion. The author, Shannon Wise, has captured the essence of the stereo-types and the feelings which many of those struggling with homosexuality encounter. I especially appreciated the reference to "places where grace abounds."

Roger Jones

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(Struggle continued from page 3)

Stereotypes had told him
The way that he should act
To leave his closet door wide open
And hop into the sack

He sexualized his feelings
Thought this is what he should do
But these led to anonymous encounters
With ones he barely knew

You see, he assumed this all defined
The person that he'd be
But he is not his struggle
Nor will he ever be

He 's just a child of God
On journey like you and me
Struggling to surrender daily
To live a life that's Holy

He lays aside his sins
And the addictions that ensnare
To run a race that's been set
With his faith in the One who cares

He told me, "It's kinda like dancing
naked"
And I wondered what he meant
He said, "It's freedom man, it's
freedom"
Then it began to make sense

Confessing all his weakness
Began to set him free
And through all of this he's realized
He's no different than you or me

His struggles may be different
But the journey is still the same
Walking that little narrow road
Toward the eternal Hope that reigns

And now he's on a daily revolution
A captive learning how to be free
His journey began with belief
In the One who appears invisibly

Healing is taking place
In ways that are profound
He's tasted the living water
In places where grace abounds

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Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka



You want something but don't get it (James 4:2)

Picture a child shopping with his mother. They arrive at the check-out lane, where candy and toys are strategically placed to grab attention and tempt shoppers into some final additions to their collection of purchases. The child sees a pack of bubble gum he simply must have and begs his mother to buy it, while she persistently denies his request. A tearful tantrum might commence, or perhaps a fierce argument. Sound familiar? Many of us have either seen this happen or experienced it firsthand.

Our grown-up versions of the child-in-the-store scenario are what drive the fights and quarrels among us (James 4:1-2). Eugene Peterson, in *The Message*, renders James' words as "...you want your own way." These are the words many adults use to describe fussy, selfish children, and I believe Peterson's interpretation

makes the point that we are very much like children when it comes to fighting and complaining to get what we want. Some of us grow into adults who even scheme and lie to satisfy our desires, because the fighting has not worked.

There are some psychologists and philosophers who believe that humans never really do anything that is not self-serving; even what may look like truly altruistic behaviors are in some way beneficial to the performer. Viewed in such light, our species looks pretty dismal. Coming to terms with our natural selfishness can be a humbling and emotionally painful journey. For the sexually broken, trying to mend past hurts sometimes means wanting relationships and intimacy in ways that are sinful. More universally, we want things our way to stay in control of our little corner of the world. Our very simplest of selfish desires, left unchecked, lead to traffic accidents, shooting sprees, child abuse, and other physical and emotional suffering for us and for those with whom we are in relationship. The good news: We have a gracious redeemer who can change our hearts to be in service to him and others (see Rom 3:9, Psalm 51:10). ✠

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1 Corinthians 9:18 “What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.”

WGA offers its services free of charge because we consider it a personal blessing to us, although we know that we have the right to do so.

2 Corinthians 7:2; 12:17 “Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one; we have corrupted no one; we have exploited no one. ... Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent you?”

WGA offers its services free of charge so that people whose hearts have been long closed, exploited by many—even in the Lord’s camp—may know that WGA is a safe place: we want only to give, expecting nothing in return.

2 Corinthians 11:8 “I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.”

WGA offers its services free of charge so that the Body of Christ may have the privilege of partnering with us to provide for the needs of those who are sexually and relationally broken. This is a humbling scripture, as Paul calls it “robbing other churches” when he receives support from them in order to serve those the Lord brought to him. I

don’t know what he meant by that description, but his heart (and mine) is so clearly expressed in the next few verses.

2 Corinthians 11:9; 12:14 “And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. . . . I will not be a burden to you, because **what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children**” (emphasis mine).

WGA provides its services without charge because we don’t want to add burdens on the backs of those who already carry heavy loads of despair, grief, fear, and doubt. We are as surrogate parents in their lives, caring for them with no requirement that they should pay us back.

In conclusion, I just want to say that WGA is (as best we could follow Him all these years) a work that is ordered, guided and directed, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. As such, our decision to offer services to group members without charge, and to petition the Body of Christ for support of our efforts, is in response to our sense of how God has directed us.

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We also know that God leads other ministry leaders, sometimes taking them on different paths. Oswald Chambers used to say that we ought not to make a program out of what God has done in our lives, but “allow God to be as creative in other people’s lives as He has been in our own.” This is a great freedom when we practice it.

In any case, whether ministries charge or not, it is my prayer that our reasons will be God-given, our motivations will be God-purged, and we will always enjoy the creativity of

the Holy Spirit in ourselves and each other. This is how I hope you will pray for us all!



Need Resources?

Here are some books WGA recommends...

Sexuality and Relationships

Men, Women and Relationships by John Gray

Boundaries by Cloud and Townsend

Homosexuality

Coming Out of Homosexuality by Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel

Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth by Jeffrey Satinover

Someone I Love is Gay by Bob Davies and Anita Worthen

Addiction and Recovery

Healing for Damaged Emotions by David Seamands

False Intimacy by Harry Schaumburg

Addiction and Grace by Gerald May



To order these titles, check your local bookstore or visit the Exodus North America website at www.exodus-international.org.



JULY AT A GLANCE

Groups, Discipleship Counseling, and Mentoring

Thursday Night Group

July 3rd - 32 people

July 10th - 36 people

July 17th - 45 people

July 24th - No group

July 31st - 45 people

Orientation meeting - 9 people

The WGA staff provided about 15
hours of discipleship counseling and
mentoring each week during July.

July 3rd - Made a presentation for the
interns of Prodigal Gatherings, a local
ministry for kids on the streets.

July 21st - 26th - The WGA staff and
others from WGA groups attended
the 28th annual Exodus Confer-
ence in Orlando, Florida.



AUGUST & BEYOND

August 12th - WGA booth at the Next Level
Church.

September 23rd, October 28th - Speaking at
New Heights Center, a local church.

October 1st - Mary Heathman will be speak-
ing at the Aurora campus of Colorado Com-
munity Church. "Mending a Relationally Bro-
ken Society" is the title of her talk.

October 5th - Participating in Missions Ser-
vice at First Denver Friends Church.

October 29th - Mary Heathman will be speak-
ing at the Englewood campus of Colorado
Community Church. "Mending a Relationally
Broken Society" is the title of her talk.

November 13 - 15th - Restoring
the Glory Conference in Denver.

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*Where Grace Abounds exists
to guide and support men
and women who seek to
understand sexuality and
relationship, and to
inspire all people to know
and personally
appropriate God's plan
for their sexuality and
relationships.*

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