



# A Measure of Grace

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## WGA's Valentine's Day

By Mary Heathman

Early Valentine's Day morning, I sipped coffee and reflected on the day ahead. It was to be a busy one, with a class to teach at the Christian Ministries Convention, working at the WGA ministry booth, and a WGA progressive social event later in the day—a white elephant gift exchange in the afternoon, dinner together, and dominoes and board games that evening.



I prayed over my notes for the class, *Single Parents: How We Can Help*. "Lord, how can I cooperate with what you are doing in the lives of the Single's Pastors, Sunday School teachers and single parents that will come to this class? Please take what is offered—our few loaves and fish—and

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swell it to meet the needs of the men and women who want to help single parents.”

The prayer is a familiar one, prayed before every class I teach, every group I lead, every discipleship counseling session in which I participate. In the face of the immense need of men and women who come to WGA, I feel like the disciples must have felt when they went to Jesus, concerned about how the hungry crowds would be fed. Jesus said, “You feed them.” (Mark

6) The disciples looked at their five loaves and two fish, knowing it wasn’t even enough for the twelve of them, and I imagine that they felt overwhelmed and confused. But they offered what they had to Jesus, and it made all the difference. He multiplied the provisions—he met the need with more left over than they started with!

WGA staff and leadership can get overwhelmed and confused if we don’t remember that Jesus is the one bringing the people to us; he is the one asking us to feed his sheep; and he is the one who takes our meager offerings and increases it to meet the needs of the people. It is for us to offer what we have at our disposal; by his grace he takes it from there.

What a blessing to offer what we have and experience the power of God at work.

It was a blessing to be a part of what God was doing in and through WGA on Valentines Day. After class one person thanked me for helping him see single parents through God’s eyes. Another commented it was a blessing to her, as a single mom, just to know that classes like this were taught and Christian leaders wanted to learn how to help. She realized that the Body of Christ was her family too!

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At the WGA booth after class, three WGA leaders visited with a young woman who attends Denver Seminary. She is excited about our ministry and wants to come learn all she can from us. She says, “I think we share the same passions.” Our spirits are uplifted to realize that God is using WGA to

inspire and encourage developing leaders.

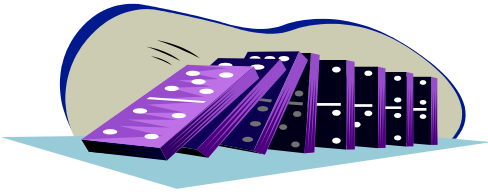
We packed up the display booth in record time and headed for the white elephant gift exchange, a popular annual WGA event where ridiculous gifts are exchanged amid great hilarity! The occasional “nice” gift is met with melodramatic “oohs” and “aahhs.” Those who have been

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# Relapse Symptoms

*Prepared by  
CompCare*

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**R**elapse begins when movement toward recovery ceases, because people in recovery need to keep moving ahead just to stay even.

It is possible to recognize when you are in trouble and headed toward the slippery slope toward relapse. You can give yourself a check up from this relapse symptoms list. Remember, you don't have to ride the progression all the way down.

1. I become overconfident in my recovery.
2. I try to force my recovery on others.
3. I avoid talking about my problems and my recovery.
4. I behave compulsively (over/under work; over talk/withdraw; isolation/hyper-socializing).
5. I overreact to stressful situations.
6. I avoid having fun.
7. I overanalyze myself and become preoccupied with one area of my life.

8. I am easily angered and become irritated with family and friends.

9. I begin blaming anything but myself for my problems.

10. I lose my daily routine, sleep irregularly, become listless.

11. I sporadically attend or don't go at all to support group and counseling sessions.

12. I develop an "I don't care" attitude.

13. I develop aches and pains. (My body is expressing unresolved emotion . . . )

14. I hoard money, sex or power.

15. I feel powerless, helpless, sorry for myself and begin to lose confidence in myself.

16. I fantasize and rationalize my favorite acting out behaviors, and start hanging around people and places that will support my desire for acting out.

17. I increase my use of non-prescription drugs, alcohol, or other

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks

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## *Birthing Eternity*

I had a great conversation with Jack last week. He told me about a recent bout with debilitating pain that had left him housebound and practically bedridden for weeks. He said that in the middle of cursing and raging at his infirmity one day, he suddenly realized that he had totally abandoned his daily practice of pressing into God and striving for patience and peace. As he did some spiritual deep-breathing after this realization, the intensity of his struggle decreased and he discovered new insights to suffering that spoke to his soul.

As I listened to Jack, I was reminded of the labor and delivery of my first baby. I had a wonderful, ex-hippie friend at the time who had introduced me to the idea of “positive pain.” She encouraged me to picture the muscles of my body stretching and pulling to make way for the baby as I experienced each contraction. “Press into the contractions as much as you can so that each one can be as effective as possible,” she said. “The more you

fight the pain, the more your body has to fight back to do what it needs to do. Remember that this is positive pain; pain with a beautiful result at the end. Picture your baby being delivered to you with each contraction.”

Lamaze went out the window within the first 30 minutes of my labor and I found myself focusing on the things my friend had told me. The difference in the contractions was remarkable.



I am realizing that the same “positive pain” principle that got me through labor and delivery of my children can be applied spiritually to get me through this life. “For mo-

mentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:16-18) The “positive pain” of this life is birthing a gloriously true Nancy for all of

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Reflections continued from page 4)*

eternity. Labor feels like forever--there are few 24 hour passages in most women's lives that ever feel longer--but in light of the lifetime of a new human being, those hours are a blink of an eye.

Romans 8 reminds us that all creation groans with us, "longing for the sons

of men to be revealed." This whole life is a birthing. God grant us the vision and the courage to press into

the pain of all that is being delivered.



*(Relapse Symptoms continued from page 3)*

drugs of choice such as pornography, fantasy, masturbation, etc.

### **Antidotes to Relapse**

1. Stop wherever you are on the progression toward relapse and admit to yourself and God that you are headed for trouble.

2. Begin to add into your life those things you have been avoiding: group attendance, talking with others about your problems (and your feelings), rest and relaxation, having fun, your daily routine, etc.

3. Purpose to move forward no matter how you feel. (Address the feelings, but don't let them define you.)

4. Pray for God's power to work in your life, inspiring both the will and the actions of recovery.

5. Praise God for progress, and celebrate your successes.

6. Never give up! Keep at it!

*Used with permission.*



(Valentine's... continued from page 2)

around a few years share memories of past years' white elephant gifts and plot to pack away their gift and "bring it back next year." (I went home with a painted coconut head with drop shell earrings!) The laughter was good for all of us after an intense week. Dinner time found us relaxing over a meal at a nearby cafeteria, then we all converged on Frana's house for our monthly game night.

In and around a game of dominoes, I could hear bits and pieces of conversations at the other tables. The rowdiest group was playing "Sorry" and didn't sound a bit sorry when they sent another player's game piece back to home base! The "Uno" game next to us was fast and furious, reversing and skipping and drawing four, all to the rhythm of the sounds of victory and defeat. This month there were too many of us for Frana's basement and several went upstairs to play word games.

**"So, I wonder if readers will think I've lost my way?"** The thought occurs to me as I read back over this article, because I wonder myself. "What dots am I trying to connect between teaching and representing WGA at the Christian Ministries Convention, and WGA social events?"

I could simply offer the description of the day as a vignette of a day in the life of WGA staff and leaders. That is likely to be of interest to our readers.

But I think I want to say a little more

than just what we have been doing. I am hoping that through the description of our day our supporters catch a little vision for how WGA operates as a discipleship ministry.

More specifically, to connect the dots a bit:

- WGA has a ministry to the church—we teach classes and provide resources to those interested in learning how to minister to men and women who seek to understand sexuality and relationships.
- WGA provides a community within which people can grow in many areas of their lives—yes, we lead support groups, but we also provide them opportunities for fellowship, fun and games as well.
- *Valentine's day—there are no dots to connect. It just happens to be the day I picked to write about!*

These activities are part of a broad range of ways that WGA staff and leadership provide for the needs of our group members.

And as Jackie Gleason used to say, "How sweet it is!" It is good to be a part of what God is doing in the lives of people. May we all know the joy of partnering with God in the care of souls!



# Sy Rogers, Featured Speaker

## April 2-3

Where Grace Abounds has invited Sy Rogers to speak at two events in the spring of 2004. Regarded as a gifted international communicator, award-winning talk show host, recording artist and pastor, Sy has served for over two decades in ministry, and 17 years as a pastoral care specialist regarding sexuality. Mark your calendars and call the WGA office if you need more information. Plan to join us!



### Sexuality and the Church 2004

The morning of April 2nd

This event is structured for people who wish to learn more about how to minister to those struggling with sexual and relational issues. Make it a point to invite your pastor!

Brochures are available from the WGA office.

### WGA Seminar

Friday evening, April 2nd and Saturday April 3rd

This seminar will address issues of sexuality and relational brokenness and is open to everyone! Contact the WGA office for a brochure.

## You're Invited!

### A Retreat for Family & Friends

### June 25th-27th, 2004

WGA will be hosting a retreat for family and friends in the spring. Mark the date on your calendars. More information will be available soon. If you are interested in attending, please contact the WGA office at 303-863-7757 or email us at [wwga@aol.com](mailto:wwga@aol.com).

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## FEBRUARY

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### Thursday Night Group

February 5th - 49 people  
February 12th - 43 people  
February 19th - 41 people  
February 26th - 52 people  
Orientation meeting - 10 new people

### Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring

The WGA staff provided about  
13 hours of discipleship  
counseling and mentoring  
each week last month.

February 8, 15, 22nd - Spoke to  
youth at Broomfield Home Church

February 8 - Presented during  
services at Trinity Presbyterian  
Church

February 12 - 14th - Christian  
Ministries Convention, WGA booth  
and speaking.

February 22nd - Presentation at St.  
Ambrose Episcopal Church

February 22nd - Spoke at a dinner  
party in Colorado Springs

February 25th - Presented to youth  
at Cherry Creek Presbyterian  
Church

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18th—presenting to a group of Lutheran pastors

April 2nd—Sexuality and the Church seminar for pastors and ministry leaders

April 2-3 - Redeemed Sexuality Seminar

April 22-24 - Restoring the Glory Conference at First Presbyterian in Boulder.

### WGA Staff

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### Purpose Statement

*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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