



A Measure of Grace

December 2004
Volume 8, Issue 12

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

Two Kinds of People

By Mary Heathman

“I here are two kinds of people: Those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “All right, then, have it your way.” C.S. Lewis



For most of my young adulthood, I was of the latter sort. One of my favorite songs in my early twenties was by Sammy Davis, Jr., “*I Did It My Way*”. Another was sung by Rickie Nelson, “*Garden Party*,” particularly the line that said, “*You can’t please everyone, so you might as well please yourself.*”

Where Grace Abounds
P.O. Box 18871
Denver, Colorado 80218

Office: 303/863-7757
Fax: 303/863-7769

email: Wwga@aol.com
www.wheregraceabounds.org

I was about twenty-five when God must have said to me, “all right, then, have it your way.” Or, maybe He didn’t actually say that to me, but it was about then when I quit trying to please anyone but myself. That choice to “have it my way”

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Two Kinds of People	1
Don't Give Up on the Church	3
Reflections	4
November Activities	8
December & Beyond	8



where grace abounds

(... Two Kinds *continued from page 1*)

eventually brought severe consequences upon me and my children that still have ripple effects today.

Of course, the consequences weren't immediate. I spent a couple of years under the illusion that I had made the right choice. I excelled in my career, lived a liberated woman's lifestyle, was Super-Mom to my two children and four step-sons. "Another song popular at the time told of my good spirits, "I'm the Happiest Girl In the Whole USA." Life seemed good.

But then, it came time to pay the piper. My career and Super-Mom roles collided. And it turned out that the so-called liberated woman's lifestyle did anything but liberate me. I found myself disillusioned and desperate. I crashed and burned, and reached out for Christ.

And in the ashes of my crash and burn, I did learn some things. It is a fact that a good bit of what I have learned, I learned by doing it wrong the first, second, even third

time, then learning by the consequences why I should have done it right the first time. It is by God's grace that the consequences eventually brought me to my knees.

Now I am the sort of person who says, "Thy will be done." (Well, a good bit of the time, anyway, and I do catch myself quicker these days when I am having a "doing it my way" side trip.)

For me, the consequences of disobedience are inextricably attached to even the thought of sinning in ways in which I used to indulge. Like the prodigal son, I came to myself in the middle of a mess, and headed for home. I don't ever want to go back!

For me, the consequences of disobedience are inextricably attached to even the thought of sinning in ways in which I used to indulge.

There are two kinds of people who come to WGA group. There are folks who are saying, "Thy will be done." And there are men and women to whom the Lord has had to say, "All right, then, have it your way." It is my hope that you will join me in praying for these group members.

(Continued on page 7)

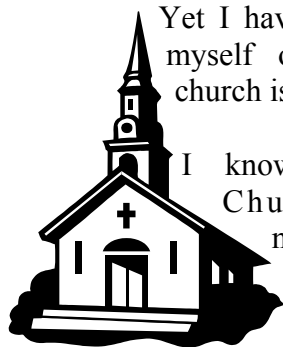
Don't Give Up on the Church

By April

I am writing as a mother of two young children to whom I have devoted my life. I pray that someday my children will choose out of their own free will to live their life for Christ. I sometimes worry about the future, wondering what kind of world my little ones will face when they are grown. Yet I continually remind myself that these children are really God's children, and any joy or pain I feel because of them, He feels much more.

Besides caring for my children, I am very active in my church. I have been going to the same church for 10 years and the longer I go to this church, the more clearly I see it's weaknesses and faults. I read the stories of those who have been hurt by Christians and I hate that that has happened.

Yet I have to remind myself of who the church is.



I know that the Church will never be a perfectly safe place

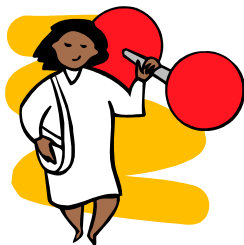
this side of heaven. We are a body of sinners saved from eternal separation from God only by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and God's grace toward us. No matter what sin we struggle with, we all fall short of God's glory and can only be justified through God's grace and Christ's redemption. (Romans 3:23-24). In Luke 7:36-50 Jesus speaks of a woman who has more sin than the Pharisees whom Jesus was dining with. Jesus canceled both of their debts of sin when He became the sacrificial lamb on the cross. Yet this woman who has come repenting of those sins, and enduring humiliation by the Pharisees in the process of it, is able to love Jesus more than the Pharisees because the woman's sin which Jesus forgives is larger than the Pharisees sin. The Bible never states whether the Pharisee repented of his smaller sin and was forgiven.

Like the Pharisees, we in the church sometimes arrogantly believe that we are better off because we have "smaller" sins than others. I believe God never

(Continued on page 5)

Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka



My yoke is easy and my burden is light
(Matthew 11:30)

While preparing delicious foods, shopping for gifts, decorating around the house, and planning for special gatherings during this characteristically beautiful and wonderful time of year, a nagging sense of emptiness accompanies my joy and anticipation. Every year, with all there is to accomplish before, during, and after Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, some of the meaning and importance get lost. Mine is not a uncommon experience. Truly, there are many that suffer from a sort of seasonal depression this time of year. So, is it simply a clinical problem needing the right medication or therapy? I would argue "no."

Something about this deeply significant season causes me to pause, even if it's briefly, and ponder the great mystery of this life here on earth and how I fit into the bigger picture. I'm not exactly sure why it happens now; perhaps it's because everyone seems to be

trying so hard to care about each other, which is a reminder of my natural need for community that I don't always feel is around me. Maybe it's because I sense pressure to be jollier than I really feel. It could be that all the materialistic hype reminds me that no amount of gifts, or cookies, or tinsel, can bring peace of mind or true love. Whatever the reason, cynical or sincere, it often translates into sadness, a weight I carry. This paradoxical burden of sorrow-in-the-midst-of-gladness, however clichéd, is one of which I wish to be relieved.

Whether I can embrace it or not, the child in the manger holds the simple answer to my classic problem. I don't have an emotional disorder; I am a lost human being in need of a savior. When Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary" (Mt 11:28), he knew that it took his coming to us, dwelling among us, and gently teaching us to lift our burdens. His offer of rest for our souls remains open this holiday season and always.



(Don't Give Up... continued from page 3)

lets us forget our sins so that we will always be humble and remember God's grace toward us. As believers we are called by God to be a light to the world. There is nothing Satan would like more than to blow that light completely out. Since he can never do that, he will do everything he can to dim that light.

One of the ways Satan can dim that light is to entice Christians to live a defeated life. The truth is that Jesus Christ offers forgiveness to those who have sinned. No sin is too heinous to be forgiven. Yet Satan wants to convince Christians that is not true. He does this by convincing us that we should be ashamed of what we have done even though we have confessed that sin and turned away from it. Whether you are someone in the Church who has had an abortion, or someone who has sinned sexually, or someone who has struggled with pornography, anytime you feel shame for sin that you have already confessed, you know Satan is at work. Satan also tries to convince family members that

*The more our
society accepts
values and
passes laws
which oppose
God's Word, the
more difficult it
is to raise
children who
choose to give
their lives to
God.*

they should be ashamed of the sin in their loved one's life. That is Satan's lie. Satan may take God's truth and use it to make Christians feel ashamed but Jesus never will. Jesus will take God's truth and lead sinners toward repentance and a restored relationship with God just as He did with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42).

Where Grace Abounds' motto is 100% Truth and 100% Grace. I have supported Where Grace Abounds for the last 14 years because I believe they follow Christ's example in extending God's love and grace to people who struggle with sexual sin especially homosexual sin and to the family and friends of these people. We,

as the church, also need to follow Christ's example of extending God's love and grace to everyone. We need to speak the truth in love and grace.

I also believe God calls us as Christians to be set apart from the world. In John 17 :14 Jesus says "...the world has hated them (His

(Continued on page 6)

(Don't Give Up... continued from page 5)

disciples) for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." Being set apart may mean that we as Christians do not watch the same movies the world does, or read the same books, or go to the same places or buy the same products because our priority is to think on and support things which are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. (Philippians 4:8) This also means that our political beliefs are formed by a Biblical world view.

For me, being opposed to gay marriage is not just a political belief but also a spiritual belief. God's Word has a lot to say about marriage. Many of us struggle

to live an obedient life within His plan for marriage between a man and a woman. We struggle to raise our children to choose the narrow road and be set apart from the world by living their lives by God's standards. The more our society accepts values and passes laws which oppose God's Word, the more difficult it is to raise children who choose to give their lives to God. For this reason I am

opposed to gay marriage as well as legalized abortion and legalized pornography.

In Hebrew 10:24-25 the Bible states the purpose of the church, which is to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds and encourage one another" as we follow in Christ's footsteps. This verse also commands us to "not give up meeting together." Jesus knows the shortcomings of the church better than anyone. He knows the church will never be a

perfectly safe place for anyone, whether they struggle with sexual sin or the sin of a proud arrogant heart. Yet I am encouraged when I see believers praising God for the work He has done in their life and those around them.



A few weeks ago we had a praise Sunday where people from the congregation stood and shared reasons they had to praise God. One woman shared how God had helped her overcome the drug and alcohol addictions in her life. She also shared how she was still struggling with a homosexual relationship and God was helping

(Continued on page 7)

(Don't Give Up... continued from page 6)

her in this struggle. She said she was happy to have found a church family who accepted her and made her feel so welcome. We clapped after her testimony praising God for not only what He had done and is doing in this woman's life, but also praising God for what He has done in our lives and praising Him that He isn't done with us yet. Perhaps God has blessed my church with a spirit of humility. But I know we are a work in process, just as are WGA group members!

Director's Note: April's heart for the Church is evident, and so is the yearning she has to see grace AND Truth expressed in Church, at WGA, in our involvement in politics. She has been a blessing to me for a long time, and I pray WGA newsletter readers are blessed as well. Mary Heathman



(Two Kinds... continued from page 2)

For those who have said, "Thy will be done," I pray that the Lord will find ways to encourage them in their deep hearts, that He will honor their obedience with the deep peace of His presence. I pray that the Holy Spirit will sustain and strengthen them through all the pain and confusion of growing up in Him, and that they will learn how to receive His provision and walk in His freedom."

My prayer for those to whom the Lord is saying, "Have it your way," I pray that the Lord will

find ways to get their attention, and that they will recognize soon the consequences of their choices. May they see in every circumstance of their lives, the severe mercy of a loving God drawing them back to Himself. I pray that the Lord will blow gently on the slightest spark of life in them, and bind up the bruised places in their hearts and minds. And I pray that the Holy Spirit's kindness will pour out upon them and lead them to repentance.

AMEN



)))

NOVEMBER

)))

Thursday Night Group

November 5th - 66 people
November 11th - 49 people
November 18th - 55 people
November 25th - Thanksgiving

Orientation meeting - 5 new people

Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring

The WGA staff provided about 15 hours of discipleship counseling and mentoring each week last month.

November 3rd - 6 week class at Christian Reformed Church ended.

November 6th - Intercessory Prayer, WGA offices 7:00-9:00 am.

November 13th - Presented at a Church of God youth conference in Estes Park.

November 14th - Presented to a youth group at a local church.

DECEMBER & BEYOND

January - Survivors of Abuse Group and Commitment Group begin. Both last for six months and are full.

February 10th - 12th - Participating in the Christian Ministries Convention.

May 6th - Sexuality and the Church, an educational seminar for pastors and ministry leaders, with special speaker Joe Dallas.

May 6-7 - Redeemed Sexuality Seminar, with special speaker Joe Dallas.

WGA Staff

Mary Heathman
Executive Director

Program Department

Scott Kingry
Program Director
Pat Bott

Assistant Program Director

Operations Department

Roger Jones
Operations Director
Sheila Knudtsen
Resource Development

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.



A Measure of Grace
is edited by
Elodie Ballantine Emig.

Printed in the USA
Copyright 2004