

September At a Glance

September 16th: Attended Banquet of Hope sponsored by HIV CareLink

September 2nd: Exodus Regional Leaders Meeting

September 24th–25th: Participated in Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church Missions Banquet

September 28th: Participated in Galilee Baptist Church Missions Prayer evening

October And Beyond

October 1st: Participated in missions dinner at Arvada Covenant Church

October 2nd: Speaking at Corona Presbyterian Church

October 14th–16th: WGA Leadership Retreat

October 30th: Speaking at Chinese Church of Denver

March 31st–April 2nd 2006: WGA Family and Friends Retreat

April 27th-29th: Restoring the Glory Conference

May 12th-13th: WGA Seminars—stay tuned for more information

Thursday Night Group

September 2nd: 54 people
September 9th: 44 people
September 16th: 46 people
September 23rd: 43 people
September 30th: 50 people

Orientation meeting: 2 new people

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A Measure of Grace
 is edited by
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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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A Measure of Grace

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A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

Good Touch—Bad Touch by Mary Heathman

Two major points from last month's article. The Truth About Touch:

- Touch is important—We must have it!!
- Touch is powerful—Be careful!!

In order to live and minister in the fullness of God's love, I believe that we must follow the Lord's admonition to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves in our approach to life and ministry. Wisdom calls for a careful and prayerful look at the issues that affect the human heart. Innocence calls for a squeaky-clean heart and mind for all concerned. Last month, I acknowledged that caution was in order in the matter of physical touch. I also made a case for the importance, even necessity, of healthy touch. This month I would like to develop



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a bit of a picture of
 the difference be-
 tween good touch
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and bad touch.

As I have considered the difference between good and bad touch, and the complex relationship between the needs of people and their vulnerabilities, I have formed a few thoughts, opinions and concerns. The following paragraphs are a smattering of my reasoning on, and sense of, the issue.

A Matter of Interpretation

When it comes to defining good and bad touch, it often comes down to a matter of interpretation. Proverbs teaches that “as a man thinks, so is he.” I take the liberty to ask, “As I have interpreted touch, is it so?”

At twenty-seven years old, I interpreted all touch from an adult as sexually motivated—men wanted sex and touchy-feely women were weird! Now at the ripe old age of sixty, I can receive a warm hug or gentle touch on the shoulder by a man or woman and simply feel affirmed or loved. What changed?

Somewhere along the line, my belief about touch has changed. I have discovered that the mind renewal that is part of growing up in Christ has changed my thinking about a lot of things. As I prayed and studied about the issue of touch, I came to a different understanding than that which used to govern my attitudes about touch.

At twenty-seven years old, I interpreted all touch from an adult as sexually motivated—men wanted sex and touchy-feely women were weird!

When I share my experience with WGA group members, they will often ask me, “But what was your part in that? What does that look like? What did you do?” In this article I offer a response for those readers who may be asking the same questions.

Question your own understanding

As scripture tells us in Proverbs 3:5-6, we must not lean on our own understanding but acknowledge Him in all our ways and He will make the path straight before us. As long as we remain committed to what we think we know already, or locked into what we think we want, we will never be

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touch that speaks of affection and warmth between us. Then, I take hold of the volunteer’s hand, I stroke it gently, move my hand up the forearm, make and hold eye contact while I am holding the hand, my voice becomes soft and breathless as I talk about what I am doing. Along about this point, a nervous laughter bubbles up in the audience. My volunteer looks embarrassed. I then say, “See! You know the distinction already! You can feel the difference! You all saw it! Now pay attention to that difference; go and live your life on the healthy side of that line

and enjoy your relationships.”

In short, when it comes to physical affection in relationships, remember that there is good touch and bad touch. Cling to that which is good—reject the evil at its first appearance. *Go for the gold, reject the dross!*” And trust God and like-minded friends to help you know the difference. ★



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they haven't even thought about what's happening in their relationships—these folks need to start thinking, paying attention, asking the “who” “what” “where” and “why” questions, described earlier in the article. Action for these people may look like pulling back in expressing affection, setting some boundaries for themselves while they ask God to change their hearts and minds about touch and get their passions under control.

Other folks are way over-controlled, so isolated that nothing is happening at all—these people need to start taking small steps, asking “Why am I afraid of touch? Why am I resistant; what blocks my way?” Action for these men and women looks like moving a little closer, even just a little at a time. It might feel like a big risk to simply place a hand on the shoulder of a friend. If so, then discussing this issue in support group meetings and with a counselor or mentor would be a good start.

A word of caution: Evaluate and pay attention as you move into experimenting. Remember I said, “Controlled Experimenting.” It is imperative that you be honest with yourself and your friends

and/or spouse, and keep guard against and resist what you already know is wrong.

For example, I accept the authority of the Bible, and as I have considered its teachings, I have come to believe that genital sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and woman violates God's standards for expressing my sexuality. Therefore, any behavior I might experiment with must not compromise this standard, or I have crossed the line and must confess and return to obedience.

I also caution against the precursor to crossing the line. This is what I call “Progressive Affection.” It is physical touch and body language that is intended to **get somewhere**, as opposed to warm and nurturing touch that simply affirms without moving us toward **more and more** intensity.

When I am speaking about this topic, in order to illustrate the difference between Progressive Affection and Nurturing Touch, I will ask a WGA leader to help me illustrate. I stand closely to the volunteer and put my arm across his or her shoulder. As we stand there like that, I talk about the naturalness, closeness of simply being together and the casual

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Warning! For Statisticians Only

By Gene Chase

Director's Note: Several Exodus leaders participated in an intense online dialogue recently. The topic of discussion was the oft-quoted belief that homosexuals are pedophiles. Statistics, thoughts, and opinions, with a few scriptures thrown into the mix, flew back and forth, and I became confused (stats often do that to me.) Then I was relieved to read a respected colleague's post. Dr. Gene Chase made the following statement and I print it here with his permission:

According to the sources cited on The Family Research Institute's web site, “2-4% of men attracted to adults prefer men. In contrast, around 25-40% of men attracted to children prefer boys. Thus the rate of homosexual attraction is 6-20 times higher among pedophiles.”

But pro-gay advocates say that more straights than gays sexually offend youth, which is also correct. I'm rounding, and I don't have a source handy for it all, but here are some numbers. The 2.4% is from Battelle Research, I remember, and may not be accepted by pro-gay advocates.

There are 300 million people in the US, about half of whom are women. 2.4% of the roughly 150 million men

are gay male, or 3.6 million gay males, leaving 146 million straight males. 25% of 3.6 million gay males are attracted to boys if we believe the above web site, or 0.4 million gays are attracted to boys. 4% of straight males are attracted to girls, giving about 5.8 million straight men attracted to girls.

Clearly, straight pedophiles outnumber gay pedophiles by a factor of 14.5 times numerically (0.4 million divided into 5.8 million).

In short: If you know that a man is gay, then the chance is much higher that he will offend a youth than a straight man will. But if you know that a man has offended, then the chance is much higher that he is straight than that he is gay.

Director's Note: Still confused? Contact my friend, Gene. He's great at this! ★

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Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka

*To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God
(Micah 6:8).*

With so many guidelines and directives for living a Christian life, found either in holy scripture, sermons, or other sources, I think it's hard to find a prescription so simple and straightforward as found in the sixth chapter of Micah. Our understandably weary God charges the people of Israel with unfaithfulness, and Micah proclaims that what the Lord requires of us is really quite simple:

Act justly. The Lord rules with justice, and he is known by his justice (see Psalm 9). God's justice is one of his defining qualities. When we, too, act justly, we will be blessed (Ps 106:3). While we do not fully understand God's justice, treating each other with fairness reflects his own character.

Love mercy. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he instructed them to ask for forgiveness with the understanding and expectation that they forgive oth-

ers (Mt 11:4). As modern disciples of Jesus, mercy should fill both our relationships with God and with others. Treating others mercifully and receiving mercy creates a harmony we learn to love.

Walk humbly with your God. Knowing our place in relation to God is essential. Paul talks at length about God's infinite wisdom compared to ours, and how he chose the weak and lowly to demonstrate his power (see 1 Cor 20:31). Humility is accepting our smallness and allowing God to take the lead. God's sovereignty and authority in our lives means that we can boast of nothing but him who created us (see Jer 9:24).

Aren't these just plain, uncomplicated teachings that we have probably heard many times over? Yes. Do we still need to hear them again? Yes. There may never be a "last time" in our lives when we return to God's basic requirements, and as we do, we are counted among his chosen people. ★



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open to the mind renewal process. Our hold on our own view of things must be set aside so that we can pray questions like: "Lord, what do you think about the human need and desire for touch? What did you originally intend for us? How shall I minister in wisdom and innocence in the face of so much need? How shall I manage my own mixed feelings about touch?"

As well as asking God about it, we must be honest with ourselves. As we search our own hearts, we can ask questions like, "What do I think about the affection in my relationships? What do I really want? What are my goals and commitment? Will the physical touch in my relationships help me meet

those goals?" Journaling an honest response to such questions will serve to help you understand your own heart, its mixed motives and deepest yearnings. That can then become your prayer list for even deeper and more intensely personal prayer as you approach God with what you have discovered about yourself. Through this process, we grow in understand-

ing of ourselves, and we give God deeper access to our hearts so He can change them.

Controlled Experimenting

As long as an issue remains in our heads and as a spiritual matter between us and the Lord, we will never make real progress toward greater health. There comes a time when we need to apply what we know so far. We need to take action—experiment a little—push against our own comfort levels if you will!

You and I, all of us, need affection. Men and women alike long to be touched, to feel a tangible connection with others. What are we to do?

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It is the same process for all of us, men, women, heterosexual or homosexual feelings, whether we are concerned for a loved one or ourselves. It is the same for me, a wounded healer needing to practice what I preach. **We all must start where we are.**

For some, touch is out of control;

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