

## October At a Glance

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

**October 2nd:** Presentation at Corona Presbyterian Church

**October 14th–16th:** WGA Leadership Retreat

**October 22nd–Presentation** at First Denver Friends Church

**October 30th:** Presentation at Chinese Evangelical Church of Denver

### Thursday Night Group

September 2nd - 56 people  
September 9th - 44 people  
September 16th - 50 people  
September 23rd - 40 people  
September 30th - 51 people

**Orientation meeting - 11 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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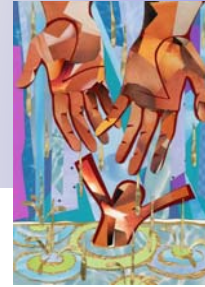
## November And Beyond

**November 5th–First Denver Friends Missions Banquet**

**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**



# A Measure of Grace

November 2005  
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## The Discipline of Disillusionment *by Mary Heathman*

Almost universally recognized in the middle adult years, often called a “mid-life crisis,” disillusionment will well up and confront us sooner or later. It is a state of mind that sends us scrambling emotionally, and sets us to reminiscing, sometimes to the point of regression—back to earlier, more hopeful times as we try to get our bearings. And it can take us to the thinnest edge of our commitments to God, ourselves, and others.

An intensive bout with disillusionment can cause one to experience both meanings of the two Chinese characters that make up the word “crisis”—one for “great danger” the other for

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**wga**  
where grace abounds

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“great opportunity.” It is during these times that we are most vulnerable to giving up the good fight, bailing out on heretofore rock-solid dreams and goals. Yet it is also when we face disillusionment that there is the most opportunity for breakthrough, for rapid growth.

Facing and living through disillusionment can be the ultimate reality check. Though painful, it results in a far greater good for those of us who want to know the truth, no matter what it is.

After a perusal of the dictionary definitions of “real,” and “illusion,” I have formed a few basic suppositions to open this article about disillusionment:

1. There is an objective reality that exists independent of whether we “see” it or not.
2. We have the capacity to believe what is contrary to reality.
3. If I am deceived, there is a process through which I can discover that I am thinking or believing wrongly.
4. This process necessarily involves exposing and destroying any deceptions or

illusions that I have - this exposure and destruction we experience as disillusionment.

With the four assumptions just listed, it would seem I could simply face my false beliefs in the light of disillusionment, choose to believe the truth, trade in my misconceptions for right thinking, thus restoring me to a state of well-being. But

alas, it is so rarely that simple is it? Our psychological, emotional, spiritual and relational framework makes the process a good bit more complicated than it would seem it needs to be.

#### Complications:

**Psychologically,** we choose our behavior based on what we believe to be true. For

an example, I remember a former belief from my own southern heritage. I was taught that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. Believing this to be true, when I wanted to get to a man’s heart—I cooked for him.

Now, this posed no problem if this belief turned out to be true for the man at hand. But if I was trying to get next to a man whose heart was

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***Facing and living through disillusionment can be the ultimate reality check.***

(Disillusionment Continued from page 10)

growth, God, and their own expectations will change. Maybe they will go for another round of a twelve-step program, or ask someone to be their accountability partner. Or, after having tried everything there is to try, they will decide to give up on the goal of change and pursue God whether He ever changes them or not.

OR, they will decide to go back to what was familiar, forgetting what disillusioned them about that path in the first place. If they have never acted out before, they might dive in to inappropriate sexual activity. Or they may jump into a premature marriage, or try keeping themselves busy with work. But it is certain that whatever they do, if they continue to seek truth, it will eventually bring them right back to the same place—disillusionment. That is the jumping off point for breakthrough and God will never give up on us.

So, whether we are in the cooperation or the avoidance mode, God will continue to work; and WGA will continue to make a place for men and women to work things out with Him and with each other.

#### **What to do in the meantime:**

1. Acknowledge your feelings - vent with God, friends, it’s ok to be angry.
2. Evaluate goals - are we shooting for the wrong thing?

3. *Pray for, look for vision, look for it from God and from others who have walked the road before you.*

4. Keep your eyes on the horizon - we are aliens in a strange land, don’t get too attached to the life and values here, for our home isn’t here, it is somewhere else.

#### **Prayer from a disillusioned heart:**

*My grief is beyond healing; my heart is broken. Listen to the weeping of my people all across the land. "Where is the Lord?" they ask. "Has God deserted us? The harvest is finished; the summer is over, and we are not saved." I weep for the hurt of my people; I stand amazed, silent, dumb with grief. Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why doesn't God do something? Why doesn't he help? (Jer. 8:18-22 [Living]). ★*



(Disillusionment continued from page 9)

with the old belief system will almost certainly react to the new. We may experience rejection, condemnation, or confusion, in our relationships. Our friends possibly will still believe the same things we have rejected, so we may be the impetus for their own disillusionment. They will be as angry and defensive as we were when disillusionment caught up to us. Some relationships will end; some will strengthen. It is often a surprise which ones survive.

So, I have found that living through disillusionment has its complications. Nonetheless, I have found that it is a trip worth taking. *(I might add that it is also a trip I haven't been able to avoid; so I face it by automatically these days, making it a shorter season, rather than lengthening it by my own resistance.)*

What does the journey look like?

Some WGA group members have come into profound disillusionment that is often the motivation for calling WGA and starting their journey toward personal growth. They are hoping for some sort of change. They may have become disenchanted about the wisdom, benefits, or fulfillment to be found through inappropriate sexual behavior.

For other men and women, their disillusionment is in response to the un-

fulfilled promises of other approaches to healing. They have prayed incessantly and white-knuckled their way into a state of despair that they will ever experience the abundant life Jesus came to give.

Most of these folks experienced WGA as a great place to be for their first season here. But sooner or later, they begin to experience distress. WGA is no longer a comfortable place to be. Maybe the change they were looking for has shown no signs of happening. They become disillusioned with WGA or God, or support groups, or . . . . .!

At this point, they feel like they are back at the place they started. And it is here that they have a decision to make. They need a reality check. If they are cooperating with what Oswald Chambers calls, "the discipline of disillusionment," they ask themselves, "What is real about healing and change? What can I reasonably expect? Is my thinking, my expectation the problem, or is the track I'm on the wrong one?" They may take some time with this season, maybe even a long time, and go back and forth hopping from one side to another, or try to straddle the fence. But eventually they will decide to re-invest themselves in one direction or another.

**Either** their beliefs about healing,  
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## Broken Dreams by Michael Maschka

*As children bring their broken toys  
with tears for us to mend,  
I brought my broken dreams to God  
because He was my friend.*

*But then instead of leaving Him  
in peace to work alone,  
I hung around and tried to help  
with ways that were my own.*

*At last I snatched them back and cried,  
"how can You be so slow?"  
"My child," He said, "what could I do?  
You never did let go."*

~Unknown Author

Do any of you remember this poem? Some might think it to be a little "corny" or trite. My mother gave me a placard inscribed with this poem many years ago when I was overwhelmed with the grief of a broken engagement with my fiancée. I found solace in these simple words, in just knowing that God could be my friend and that He actually took some interest in my circumstances.

I have spent considerable time contemplating a host of dreams that have eluded my grasp, often leaving me in a state of deep despair and remorse. Marriage, children, financial security, an established career and freedom from unwanted sexual struggles are just a few dreams I'd envisioned for myself by the time I entered my forties. These dreams have yet to be fulfilled and my mind is often plagued with such questions as – What happened? Where did the time go? What was I doing? What was I thinking? What went wrong? One day I was 25 years old, and the next day I woke up, I was 42! Please know that I am also aware of the many blessings in

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my life, but that truth does not negate or discount the pain and loss associated with dreams that have yet to be realized. I will not attempt to answer all of these nagging questions but rather to share with you the revelation that God has and continues to use my broken dreams to bring me to my knees and into intimate communion with Him.

Recently, a dear friend introduced me to a book by Larry Crabb, entitled *Shattered Dreams* (2001). The title, itself, indicated that I was in for an emotional road-trip and that has certainly been the case. Dr. Crabb writes, "Shattered dreams are never random. They are always a piece in a larger puzzle, a chapter in a larger story. The Holy Spirit uses the pain of shattered dreams to help us discover our desire for God, to help us begin dreaming the highest dream. They are ordained opportunities for the Spirit first to awaken, then to satisfy our highest dream."

As a broken man, I am well-acquainted with the reality of my need for Jesus. I am just beginning to grasp how deeply my soul longs for Him above anything else in this world, including all of my dreams.

***I am just beginning to grasp how deeply my soul longs for Him above anything else in this world, including all of my dreams.***

Larry Crabb believes that to truly and fully experience the highest dream of God, Himself, we must abandon all of our "lesser dreams." When I first read this, I was terrified! However, as I quieted my soul and considered this notion, it occurred to me that Crabb was not suggesting anything that we have not read in the Bible, specifically Matthew 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all of these things will be given to you as well" (NIV).

In the song, "Dreams I Dream for You" (1997, Words and Music by Douglas McKelvey and Charlie Peacock – performed by Avalon), the writers capture the essence of our heavenly Father's hopes and dreams for each of His children...

*The dreams I dream for you are deeper than the ones you're clinging to. More precious than the finest things you knew and truer than the treasures you pursue. Let the old dreams die like stars that fade from view. Then take the cup I offer and drink deeply of the dreams I dream for you.*

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invested, not in good cuisine, but in being physically fit, then we both had a problem. Feeding him could sabotage his goals; even tempt him away from his heart's commitment. His response might be to distance himself from me, and I might become understandably confused - maybe I could try harder, preparing even more enticing food for him.

Of course, we can see where that will lead. Ultimately I will either drive him away—by simply behaving according to what I believe, or I would have to choose a different tack. For instance, I could actually pay attention to the fact that what I am doing isn't working, maybe even ask the man what he wants, thereby finding out what is "real."

And I could choose to adjust my behavior accordingly. Hopefully, my thinking adjusts too: **the way to a man's heart varies, depending on the man - you need to get to know him.** If my thinking doesn't change, I will continue to believe that the way to a man's heart is through food. In the end I may even come to the conclusion that the man is defective, not my belief!

**Emotionally**, we have invested in and acted upon what we believe for many years. If our belief is wrong,

then those years seem to us to have been wasted. When first challenged by a dose of reality, we become angry or feel threatened. Most of us want so much to be right. When we discover we are wrong, then we must face the ramifications of many years of doing things wrong. Realizing all that we have lost, or never obtained, because of our false assumptions, we experience depression, regrets, conviction, or confusion. We think, "If that isn't true, then what is? If I can be so wrong about that, then what else am I wrong about? Can I even trust myself at all?" This season of self-doubt and regret can slide easily into deep shame and self-condemnation.

***Some WGA group members have come into profound disillusionment that is often the motivation for calling WGA and starting their journey toward personal growth.***

**Spiritually**, disillusionment can take us directly into the process of confession, repentance, and deliverance, leading to the renewal of our minds and hearts. But if we fight it, we will start distancing ourselves from God. After all, He is the one who sets the reality standard. "If it wasn't for Him," we think, "I could still have my comfortable illusions and wouldn't be in this chaotic, painful confusing mess."

**Relationally**, complications abound as well. People who have known us

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that need to be taken into account if we're going to have any credibility on this issue:

-The majority of men who abuse boys are in heterosexual relationships at the time. While that doesn't prove that they're straight, it at the very least means that they aren't going to be counted on any survey among the 3% that self-identify as gay.

-Many of the above men report being attracted to the 'feminine' attributes of prepubescent boys. By definition, male homosexuals are attracted by masculinity, not femininity.

-Rape is often more about domination and violence than it is about sex. A man who lashes out in that way isn't necessarily going to be picky about the gender of his victim.

-Many pedophiles are exclusively attracted to children. A person who has no interest in adult men or women cannot meaningfully be categorized as either heterosexual or homosexual.

In short, while it's possible that gay men are still more likely than straight men to sexually abuse children, the margin is considerably narrower than [conservative

public policy groups] acknowledge. But while I've come to expect those kinds of political word games from [these other agencies], I have to admit that I expect better from WGA. Maybe it's unfair of me to hold WGA to a higher standard, but it's the commitment to both truth and grace that I've seen at WGA that enables me to resist the inclination to disassociate from evangelical Christianity altogether.

And the truth sometimes cuts both ways. If we're going to selectively ignore those facts that don't advance our agenda, we shouldn't be so surprised when the rest of the world stops taking us seriously. We can console ourselves by saying that we're being ignored because the devil is clouding their minds, or we can admit that sometimes it's our own fault.

Anyway, I apologize if that turned into a lecture. I decided it would be better to directly air my grievance rather than bottle it up or go venting to some third party in an internet forum."

*Director's Note: No apology necessary; a different perspective, respectfully stated, is always welcome! MH ☆*

## Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks

Isaiah 50:10 & 11

Who is among you that fears the Lord,  
That obeys the voice of His servant,  
That walks in darkness and has no light?  
Let him trust in the name of the Lord and  
rely on his God.  
Behold all you who kindle a fire.  
Who encircle yourselves with firebrands,  
Walk in the light of your fire  
And among the brands you have set ablaze.  
This you will have from My hand;  
And you will lie down in torment.



Imagine being lost in a vast stretch of wilderness in the pitch black—say, at one of the ends of the earth where darkness covers everything for months at a time. You have the choice between having a flashlight in your hand, and being lead in the dark by a silent guide. The flashlight would be tangible; you could feel it in your hand. You could control it—in the midst of feeling so little control—by turning it off and on. If there was a strange noise, you could quickly turn the light to see the source. No cliff or gaping hole could take you by surprise with such a trusty tool.

On the other hand, what if the silent guide moves more quickly than you do? What if you fail to follow well and find yourself in a hole or falling off of a sheer rock face? How can you be assured that you are being led, or haven't been left behind?

The natural inclination would be to choose short-term control—the flashlight. But another moment's reflection would reveal that in the larger scheme, a flashlight would be of very little help. You would still not know the way out of the wilderness. You would simply see a 10 foot circle of where you were lost. Eventually, the battery would run down. Eventually, you would have to sleep with no guarantee of safety. Eventually, you would

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be engulfed by the same lonely darkness you began with.

God offers me Himself as guide—a dicey, scary proposition. I have to trust that He knows what He's doing, that He has my best interest in mind and that He won't forget about me.

I do have other options—flashlights, if you will. I can make enough money to protect myself and pave the way; I can get enough education so that I can ensure that I will have the understanding and job security that I need to find my way; I can be sure to have a spouse, children, friends, to protect me and guide me and ensure that I am not alone. I can until the stock market

crashes, my health fails, the unexpected accident interrupts my plans, the people in my life fail me and leave me. Then I find myself sitting with a dead flashlight in the dark.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).

I am sorry if this speaks to your condition, because you are probably in a place of darkness. But I am glad if this speaks to your condition, because God is a worthy guide. Where can we go, but to Him?★

(Broken Dreams continued from page 4)

As the days, weeks, months and even years go by, there will, no doubt, be times when inconsolable pain overwhelms me as I ponder dashed hopes, missed opportunities and broken dreams. However, as long as I choose NOT to deaden that pain and continue to seek refuge in the arms of my Father, then there is hope and we know that “hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us” (Romans 5: 3-5).

The question I am compelled to ask myself is, “Am I willing to bring my broken dreams to God, for the sole purpose of knowing Him and being in relationship with Him, without the expectation or the promise that He will bring my earthly dreams to fruition?” I dream that, in my lifetime, I can boldly answer this question with a resounding, “YES!” ★



## Stats Static (another look)

*Director's Note: I knew when I decided to present the blurb on stats last month, that there were other ways to interpret them, even different sources for the numbers themselves. Sure enough, a newsletter reader wrote to let me know of his differences with the last article. I offer his comments for those who may be interested in hearing different interpretations of the statistics on the relationship between sexual orientation and pedophilia. The opinions expressed by the author are not necessarily those of Where Grace Abounds.*

*As you read, and especially if you visit the website cited, keep in mind the writer's admission that the article to which he refers is biased. I have visited the website and found the article reasonable, fair and well-documented; it is certainly worthy of consideration if the subject itself interests you. Feel free to let me know what you think—we can publish a bit of a point-counter-point in the next newsletter if there is interest.*  
Mary Heathman

Just read the current issue of the WGA newsletter and was very bothered by the article purporting to provide statistics related to child abuse by homosexuals. While the author does well enough at attacking the straw man argument that heterosexual pedophiles outnumber homosexual pedophiles, his overall analysis of the issues involved was so shallow as to be virtually meaningless. It's clear from the numbers that he uses that he has made the common but mistaken assumption that any man who sexually abuses a boy is a) homosexual and b) among the slightly less than 3% that self-identify as gay.

I encourage you to read an article found at: <http://www.lookingforsam.com/archive/2005/2005-09.htm#26-01>. While the author clearly has his own bias, his case is more thoroughly and evenhandedly researched than anything I've seen on the Christian side of the aisle. Whether or not we take all of his data at face value, he does make a number of valid points

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