



September 2007
Volume 11, Issue 9

A Measure of Grace

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

Self Care: An Antidote to Addiction *Part 3* *By Roger Jones*

This month, we pick up our series on self care with the topic of emotional health. While we often have the ability to choose what kind of attitude we approach life with, we do not always have the ability to choose our feelings. That said, we need not be tossed around by our emotions either. Emotions have their appropriate place and must be managed accordingly. Otherwise, we can find ourselves turning to addiction to make ourselves feel better.

We often treat the “non-feel good” emotions like they are bad. Rather than facing our feelings head on and letting them lead us to an appropriate response, we stuff our feelings, or we allow them to take over our lives. Either extreme can lead us to addictive behaviors that we use to cope with the damage caused to ourselves and others. Our emotions tell us something about ourselves and should not be ignored.

Inside this issue:

Self Care	1	Throughout my life, I have stuffed my feel-
Green Light	4	(Continued on page 2)
Reflections	6	
August at a Glance	8	
September & Beyond	8	

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

Wwga
where grace abounds

(Self Care continued from page 1)

ings. This is for a variety of reasons, but the biggest one for me is that I want to be the “nice guy.” I learned this pretty early on in life. As a young boy, I was teased a lot, mostly by other boys my age. Through this, I discovered that when at all possible, I should be invisible to those around me. When being invisible wasn’t an option, I should be very nice or funny. I couldn’t be honest about my feelings, because I might be rejected again.

This meant that expressing my emotions was out of the question. I adopted a method of relating to other people where I made it clear up front that I was worthless and not worth paying attention to. I did this through self deprecating comments and jokes about myself. It was how I survived.

Now, as an adult I am more able to take care of myself when conflict arises. And yet, I still find myself using this style of relating with people. Particularly in new relationships, I find myself leading off with the same self deprecating types of jokes that I learned how to use as a little boy. And, it actually works! For everyone but me, that is. My new “friend” really likes me and thinks that I am funny. I feel “less than” and weak and unknown, be-

cause I haven’t been honest with my feelings.

There is a cost to not being authentic in relationship. Resentment can build, because no one seems to care about what I really want or need. The important people in my life do not understand or even realize that I need something different than I have indicated. Why would they? From their perspective, I am the easy going, nice guy who never has an opinion or a feeling about anything.

***Our emotions
tell us
something
about ourselves
and should not
be ignored.***

People handle emotions in different ways, often-times choosing to ignore them. When left unchecked, these un-dealt with feelings can erupt in many different ways. For example, when we repress anger, it tends to come exploding out at the most inopportune times. We get furious with a clerk in the grocery store for making a simple mistake, when we

are really angry with our husband or wife, our children, and our boss. Or, someone pulls in front of us on the highway, and we vent a year’s worth of anger at them.

We also cope with unexpressed emotion through addiction. Legitimate anger is stuffed inside, which then can turn into self-hatred or entitlement. “I should be treated badly, be-

(Continued on page 3)

(Self Care continued from page 2)

cause I am not worth much anyway,” or “I deserve to be cared for, so I guess I’ll have to take care of my own needs.” We turn to our addictions, because they help us believe our self hating thoughts and reinforce our beliefs about what we are entitled to. Addiction creates a barrier in our relationships. This barrier protects us from the pain of rejection, but we are dying alone in our small world of self medication and obsession.

The flip-side of under-expressed emotion is over-expressed emotion. Oftentimes a person will express every random thought or emotion that comes to mind, without filtering what may be helpful or important based upon timing or the depth of the relationship. An example of this is a person who shares too much too soon in a new relationship. An attraction to someone is expressed too soon, short circuiting the natural development of the relationship. Or, someone who reminds you of a past relationship gets a whole heap of emotions (positive or negative) dumped on them, because you are processing the old and the new relationships at the same time. This can be overwhelming.

When we are dealing with over-expressed emotions, we can find ourselves turning to addictive behaviors out of loneliness and feelings of rejection. We have driven people away and don’t understand why. We feel misunderstood and abandoned. We

have shared too much, and we cannot take back what we have said. We have effectively isolated ourselves by becoming lost in our emotions.

If you find yourself under-expressing or over-expressing emotions, my best advice is to find someone else to process your feelings with, so you can discuss how you feel, but the relationship involved will not be impacted negatively and can remain clean. A support group, friends, or a therapist should be able to provide you with honest feedback and help you get outside of yourself enough to bring clarity.

Of all three topics I have covered in this series (spiritual, physical, and emotional self care), emotional self care is the most difficult to face. There is risk involved in speaking your mind and expressing your emotions, particularly in those relationships in which the other person does not know the “real” you. *Being an authentic, transparent person is essential to overcoming addiction.*

I challenge you to let the men and women in your life see who you really are. God made you unique, and you are worth being known. I believe when the emotional “pressure” is reduced, the intense pull of addiction will be reduced. I pray that God will guide you in your relationships and in your efforts to take care of yourself.

☆

Where's the Green Light?

By Mary Heathman

Two friends and I were discussing today how each of us is struggling to find God's direction in a key area of our lives. As we talked, I thought of how often I had been at this particular place—seeking God's direction and finding Him maddeningly silent! At one point, my friends and I lapsed into a companionable, though glum, silence. Nothing much to say, no “word from the Lord” so far, so we just sat there together for a few moments.

As I think back on the conversation, I remember many times in my faith journey that I simply didn't get the specific directions I was looking for, though I felt desperate to hear from Him. In fact, the times I did get specific direction are few and far between—the rare exception rather than the rule, it seems.

Sunday, my pastor, Charles Orwiler, spoke on finding the will of God. One of the points he made resonates still, “We are always looking for what *God wants us to do*, looking to find His specific direction—like who to marry, what job to take, or what college



to attend. But God's will is to form us into *becoming* the will of God.”

Chewing on this idea a few days, I've decided to adopt a new prayer for this season, “*Lord, show me how you are forming me into becoming Your will; and don't let me give up till my will merges with Yours.*” I am pleased and at peace with this focus on prayer and waiting on the Lord.

On the other hand, tomorrow I

(Continued on page 5)

(Green Light continued from page 4)

still have to show up at a WGA staff planning meeting and participate in discussions about the future of WGA. We intend soon to get specific about what we shall do in the coming year. I find myself grateful that I have a little help from my pastor and friends to help me bear up under the tension of these decisions barreling down on me without any hint from God as to what new projects He wants me to add to my plate.

Yet, even in the seeming vacuum, there's a bubbling about of thoughts and ideas as to what I could and would do, "if only." If only what, I wonder? What if the thoughts and ideas that well up in our planning meeting are rooted in the shaping and forming God has been doing in us thus far in our lives? What if we just take a few steps out there and try them on for size? What if we just start going for it?

It was in this state of mind that I ran across a new favorite website, called Geography of Grace, www.geographyofgrace.org. A post from one of its contributing authors, Jeff Johnsen, from Mile High Ministries says,

... thinking about the Ten Commandments.

I wonder if God might have been saying something like:

"Here is the music I don't want you to play, but beyond that, go for it!

Here are some things I don't want you to say,

but beyond these, be as creative as you can be.

Here are the things I don't want you to do,

but beyond that, go until I say stop!"

Limitations? Invitations?

What if God might have been saying something like: You know the parameters; don't violate them, but beyond that, go for it!"

I believe I will do just that! Within His *Truth and Grace Without Compromise*, I think I will just go until He says stop!"

Care to join the Adventure? ☆

Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks



Disillusionment

It's almost always used as a bad word, disillusionment. It evokes feelings of confusion, pain, betrayal, abandonment . . .

But a deconstruction of the word perhaps gives us vision for something that might come after disillusionment. "Dis" is a prefix meaning "reversal" or "removal." And the word "illusion" (also according to Webster) means "something that deceives by producing a false impression of reality."

Could it be that disillusionment is, more often than not, an experience that clears the way for reality? Burns away the fog of our illusions about the way we work and life works and makes clearer the path to true and honest living? Here's what that might look like:

- When the illusion of control that I have over my life or others' lives is dissolved, I am more able to see the REALITY that God is in control—I

can finally hear God say to my anxious heart "Cease striving and know that I am God (Ps 46:10); I know the plans I have for you, plans for welfare and not calamity to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11)"

- When my lofty opinion of myself is torn down and I see the REALITY of my brokenness, I can agree with Paul, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." And then accept the gift: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn 1:8-10)" This truth about myself and God will set me free from my hard work to maintain my superiority! (Jn 8:32)
- When people I have counted on to support me, to love me, to teach me, to guide me, fail me—I can begin to see better the REALITY that God is my rock, my fortress, my refuge.

(Continued on page 7)

(Reflections continued from page 6)

Then I can hear God speak through Isaiah and believe, “Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.” (Is 49:15&16)

Winston Churchill once said, “if you’re going through Hell, don’t stop.” I echo the challenge here, “if you’re going through disillusionment, don’t stop!” Don’t settle for less than the crystal clear, rock solid reality that God is longing for us to discover and live in.

May our disillusionment be complete. ☆

The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become- because He made us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be...It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own.

C. S. Lewis

thisdaysthought.org



August At a Glance

August 9-11: Mary presented at the Rock Mountain Yearly Meeting Conference

Thursday Night Group

August 2nd: 51
August 9th: 51
August 16th: 49
August 23rd: 46
August 30th: 35

Orientation meeting: 4 new people

September And Beyond

September 1st: WGA will be presenting at Here's Love Christian Fellowship

September 20th: WGA Orientation Meeting

September 20-22: Mary will be speaking at the MOPS annual leadership training convention

September 25th: Scott will be speaking at Tuesday Morning Joy

October 6th: Intercessory Prayer: Join us from 7:00—9:00 am at the WGA offices

October 19-21: WGA Leadership Retreat

WGA Staff

Roger Jones
Executive Director

Scott Kingry
Program Director

Mary Heathman
Founding Director

A Measure of Grace
is edited by
Elodie Ballantine Emig

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.

Printed in the USA
Copyright 2007