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A Measure of Grace

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds



WGA Services *by Roger Jones*

Where Grace Abounds strives to provide the best information and services for those seeking help for sexual and/or relationship problems. Every once in awhile, it is important to remind our readers of the various services WGA provides. This is multi-fold in purpose: 1) so that you are aware of how WGA may serve you and your family, 2) so that you can tell others who may be in need, 3) so that you can pray for those taking advantage of WGA's programs and services, and 4) so that you can pray for the staff, Board of Directors, and leadership of WGA.

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Orientation Meeting.

When a person first contacts us, whether by phone, email or in person, they are encouraged to attend an Orientation Meeting.

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At this meeting, those in attendance learn about WGA's history, the services offered, and they hear the stories of several who have been around the ministry for awhile. Also at this meeting, issues of confidentiality are discussed and the Disclosure Statement is reviewed. Those who choose to participate in WGA's groups must sign the Disclosure Statement, acknowledging they understand the limits to confidentiality.

Thursday Night Group. Once the Orientation Meeting has been completed, the weekly Thursday Night Group becomes available. This is a drop-in group, available as needed to people. There is no commitment required to participate, although regular attendance is encouraged. Thursday Night Group consists of the following:

- **Foundations.** This 12 week series of classes is designed to give men and women a solid, foundational understanding of sexual and relationship issues. Classes include *A Theological Look at Sexuality*, *The Battle Within and Without: Spiritual Warfare in Sexual Struggles*, and *A Deeper Look: What is Underlying My Struggle?* Participants are also introduced to small group time, where they

are given the opportunity to share the issues which brought them to WGA. A facilitator trains participants to have productive and encouraging group interactions.

- **Core Group.** For those who have completed the 12 weeks of Foundations, Core Group becomes available. Similar in structure to Foundations, participants hear from a speaker on a topic related to sexuality and/or relationship, followed by a small group time. A facilitator leads the sharing time, ensuring that each person is given an opportunity to share.
- **Family and Friends.** Parents, siblings, spouses, and loved ones are encouraged to attend the Family and Friends Group, which also meets weekly. Those who come to WGA to participate in this group will hear the same speakers as Foundations or Core Group, followed by a facilitated small group where an opportunity is given to share with others from a similar perspective: a desire to love and support a loved one who is dealing with a sexual or relationship problem.
- **Spouses.** Twice each month, a group specifically for the spouses of those who are fac-

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Heartsick...Again

by Mary Heathman

In February of 1999, in a newsletter article called *Heartsick*, I wrote about circumstances that can send me into a spiral of discouragement. As I read the article, looking for something to write about today, I found myself in tears over my own words from almost ten years ago. It has been a very sad week for people close to me, and I have listened to several WGA group members who have been deeply discouraged lately.

Yet in the rereading, I was encouraged by the process I described about how I deal with myself when brought down by discouragement. It was a good reminder for me, and because it is so relevant for today, I decided to reprint an excerpt to encourage newsletter readers as well.

"As I think of [so many] sad situations, my mind cringes - on your behalf as well as mine. I want to remind us all that God is good and that He works all things together for good I believe and have experienced this truth many times, and I praise God often for His sovereignty.

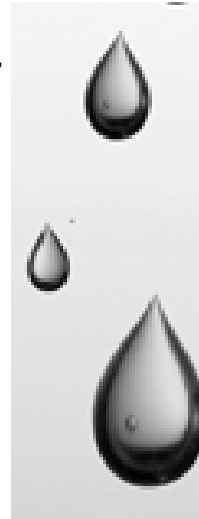
"But sometimes the counting of many blessings and the remembering of God's promises just isn't what's needed for the moment. In moments like these, I draw strength from the words of Job, when he says, "My good days are in the past. My hopes have disappeared. My heart's desires are broken" Job 17:11 (Living). Job seems to understand what heartsickness feels like, [and in the reading] I no longer feel quite as alone [in my despair].

"Job goes on to say, "The fact of the matter is that God has overthrown me and caught me in his net. I scream for help and no one hears me. I shriek, but get no justice. God has blocked my path and turned my light to darkness. He has stripped me of my glory and removed the crown from my head. He has broken me down on every side, and I am done for. He has destroyed all hope." Job 19:6-10 (Living) It appears that Job knows the buck stops with God, and reading his complaint gives me permission to pour out my own frustration. In the doing of this, the darkness seems less thick.

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Reflections: Frederick Buechner on Tears

You never know what may cause them. The sight of the Atlantic Ocean can do it, or a piece of music, or a face you've never seen before. A pair of somebody's old shoes can do it. Almost any movie before the great sadness that came over the world after the Second World War, a horse cantering across a meadow, the high school basketball team running out onto the gym floor at the start of a game. You can never be sure. But of this you can be sure, whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention.



They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are. More often than not, God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and to summoning you to where, if your soul is to be saved, you should go to next.

Frederick Buechner, *Whistling in the Dark: An ABC Theologized*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1993) p. 117.

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“In the midst of his complaint, Job says something remarkable, “But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And I know that after this body has decayed, this body shall see God! Then he will be on my side! Yes, I shall see him, not as a stranger, but as a friend! What a glorious hope!” Job 19:25-27 (Living) Well, I find myself with a choice here - write Job off as nuts, or follow his example. On my good days, I follow his lead. Job, having lost over a dozen children, his wealth and health all in one day, lifted the eyes of his heart and remembered that in the end God wins and we do too. If Job could do that, then I can shake myself free of my own discouragement, at least for a moment, and strain toward God, naming Him as my Salvation, and looking forward to the day when my faith shall be sight and I will see him as a friend.

“Later, maybe several days, Job says, “[God’s] mind concerning me remains unchanged, and who can turn him from his purposes? Whatever he wants to do, he does. So he will do to me all he has planned, and there is more ahead. Job 23:13-14 (Living) Here we see acceptance, maybe a bit of resignation, but certainly a submission to God and His purposes, not just for today’s circumstances, but for what

is up ahead as well. Whether sooner or later, I want to get to that place too. I’ve been there before and I know it’s the place of peace and hope. I pray for my friends and for our group members that they, too, will persevere and come into that place as well. Will you pray with me?

“A FINAL NOTE: Anybody who sets their course to live a godly life will face diverse troubles. We can count on it. There will be times when we lose our peace, maybe even lose our hope, and our hearts will get sick with the realities of this fallen world, especially our own sin nature. There will also be times when our hearts’ desires, even that which we believe God promised us, are so far out of reach we despair that they will ever be fulfilled. But even so, we can shake off all of that and look up toward Him who is our Salvation and remember that our goal, the real One, the only eternal One is reachable and assured. The feelings come and go, but the truth is the same nonetheless. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Peter 1:8

The only thing that matters forever cannot be taken from us.”

WGA Services continued from page 2)

ing a sexual or relationship problem is offered. Spouses are given the opportunity to connect with others who are facing similar issues in their own marriages and can offer encouragement to one another.

Discipleship Counseling. Ministry participants who are in need of more time to talk than what is afforded them during the small groups on Thursday nights, are encouraged to participate in Discipleship Counseling. This gives them the chance to meet with two of the WGA staff or leaders (a male/female team) who will offer insights from their own healing experiences. Typically, a series of Discipleship Counseling will last from 8-12 weeks.

Focus Groups. For those seeking a group with a specific focus, WGA offers a variety of choices as needed each year. These groups require a commitment from the participants for 3-6 months, which increases safety and accountability. To participate, individuals must have completed Foundations and a series of Discipleship Counseling. Below are the Focus Groups currently offered:

- **Survivors of Abuse.** This group meets weekly for six months and is designed to ex-

plore the effects of sexual, emotional, physical, and/or spiritual abuse in the life of each participant. It means a deeper level of commitment to the healing process because this group explores areas of people's lives that many have tried to forget. Great care is taken to help people see God's interaction in their lives, both in the present and in the past.

- **Commitment Group.** These groups of men or women meet weekly for three or six months and provide consistency and opportunity for healthy intimacy in same-sex relationships. Accountability is a key part of these groups, as well as being transparent, taking risks, and sharing honestly. Participants give other group members permission to know them and to ask about their "growing



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edges.”

- **Growth Group.** This group meets weekly for six months and is designed to explore roadblocks and barriers in the development of relationship with members of the opposite gender. An equal number of male and female participants is necessary, as many of the exercises are most effective when done in partnership with someone of the opposite gender.
- **Going Deeper with God.** This group meets weekly for three months and is a discussion study on how to have a personal interactive relationship with God. The material explores how to have honesty with God mentally, emotionally, spiritually and volitionally. This material helps you look inward to realize your personal beliefs about God and how you desire to relate to God in a give and take relationship. Discussions are a combination of the material, your honest reactions to what you have been taught about God and how you really feel about God.

Youth. The WGA staff works individually with youth (those under 18). This is done through Discipleship Counseling. WGA currently does not offer a group for

those under 18.

Speaking/Training. The WGA staff speaks on a variety of topics related to sexuality and relationships. These are offered in church services, Sunday School classes, Christian schools, and at conferences. Speakers are available to travel, as needed.

Referrals. WGA keeps a current list of professional counselors and other ministry resources in the Denver/Colorado area. Individuals may be referred to another source which may be better able to offer specialized care WGA does not provide. Oftentimes, participating in professional counseling and in one of WGA’s groups concurrently can be an excellent catalyst towards healing.

If you would like further information about any of the services listed above, please contact the WGA office, at 303-863-7757 or info@wheregraceabounds.org.



August At a Glance

**August 22nd: Scott presented at
Corona Presbyterian Church**

August 22nd: WGA Women's Event

August 23rd: WGA Men's Event

**August 26-26th: WGA hosted prayer events for the
Democratic National Convention**

September And Beyond

**September 19-21st: Mary will be speaking at the
New Hope Family and Friends Retreat in San
Rafael**

**September 14th: Mary will be speaking at Little
Chapel of the Hills**

**September 21st: WGA will be presenting at
Calvary Worship Center in Colorado Springs**

**October 4th: Intercessory Prayer. Join us from
7:00—9:00 AM at the WGA offices**

October 17—19th: WGA Leadership Retreat

**October 26th: WGA Presenting at First Denver
Friends Church**

**October 30th: Open Meeting. Call the WGA office
if you would like to visit our Thursday Night Group**

Thursday Night Group

August 7th: 47 people

August 14th: 45 people

August 21st: 33 people

August 28th: 33 people

**Orientation meeting - 4 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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