



A Measure of Grace

January 2011
Volume 15, Issue 1

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

Sexual Abuse, an Expanded Definition

by Roger Jones

Sexual abuse is common in the history of the men and women that come to Where Grace Abounds. These types of experiences can have unique and lasting effects in a person's life, which is one of the reasons we offer a six month group each year specific to abuse. Sometimes a person arrives on our doorstep with a clear understanding of what has happened to them; at other times there seems to be a sense of denial about it. Perhaps part of the denial stems from confusion about what sexual abuse really is.

As part of the group I mentioned above, we suggest people read *The Wounded Heart*. **A note of caution:** While we highly recommend the book, it is not an easy read, especially if one is going through it alone. We encourage people to talk with their support system about what they are reading.

Where Grace Abounds
P.O. Box 18871
Denver, Colorado 80218-0871

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

email:
info@wheregraceabounds.org
website:
www.wheregraceabounds.org



In the book, Dan Allender gives us this definition of abuse:

"Sexual abuse is any contact or interaction (visual, verbal, or psychological) between a child/adolescent and an adult when the

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Sexual Abuse	1
Right Risk-Taking	3
Playing Fair	6
Dec in Review	8
Jan and Beyond	8

(Sexual Abuse continued from page 1)

child/adolescent is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or any other person.”¹

He goes on to say:

“Sexual abuse may be committed by a person under the age of eighteen when that person is either significantly older than the victim or when the perpetrator is in a position of power or control over the victimized child/adolescent.”²

In childhood, many have experienced the worst kinds of abuse at the hands of their peers, sometimes even from someone younger. Whether or not these experiences fit within the definition of “sexual abuse,” the effects can be just as traumatizing and life altering.

I was first introduced to my sexuality when I was about eight years old. It was initiated by boy a who was a year younger than I was. Beyond the common childhood threat of “I won’t be your friend anymore if you don’t do this,” I don’t remember being forced or bullied into anything. For years, I wrote this experience off as childhood curiosity. In retrospect, it was clearly more. As it involved oral sex, this went beyond the common “I’ll show you mine if you’ll show me yours” incident. Undoubtedly, this boy had either been physically sexually abused himself or exposed to pornography or some other such occurrence. The things that had happened to him were then happening to me. I, in turn, shared my new-found knowledge with other boys my age as well.

Allender describes two broad categories of sexual abuse: sexual contact and sexual interactions:

“*Sexual contact* involves any type of physical touch that is designed to arouse sexual desire (physical or psychological) in the victim and/or the perpetrator.”³

“*Sexual interactions* are far harder to acknowledge because they do not involve physical touch and therefore do not seem as severe. Many times it involves a subtle sexual invasion that leaves the victim wondering if it occurred or if it is a byproduct of her own distorted imagination. Interactions can be categorized as visual, verbal, or psychological.”⁴

Sexual contact seems to include all of the things one normally defines as sexual abuse. Sexual interactions, as Allender explains, can be much more understated and difficult to identify. As I speculated about the boy who introduced me to oral

sex —being exposed to pornography or sexual situations at an early age are abusive. A son or a daughter who is subject to lingering stares by a father or older adult, or even simply hearing sexually explicit language and jokes can generate effects similar to a person abused through sexual contact.

When I was slightly older than I was in the incident I described, I had several incidents of sexual interactions. The memories I recall were not of the subtle

(Continued on page 3)

Being sexually abused, whether with sexual contact or with sexual interactions, has consequences.

(Sexual Abuse continued from page 2)

variety. I can recall two separate times that older boys in my neighborhood exposed themselves while aroused to me. If you've been reading this newsletter for awhile, you may recall that I wrote about another time when an older boy locked me in his van and showed me pornography. He then tried to coerce me into taking my clothes off and posing like the women in the magazine. None of these experiences involved physical contact, but there was clearly an effect upon me.

Being sexually abused, whether with sexual contact or with sexual interactions, has consequences. Allender writes whole chapters about powerlessness, betrayal, and ambivalence, with another chapter on secondary symptoms and another about how our styles of relating are shaped. These types of experiences go deep and can have long lasting effects.

My hope is that this article has opened your eyes to the complexities of defining what sexual abuse is. By simply living and breathing in an over-sexualized culture, we are bombarded all the time with what could be described as sexual interactions. Perhaps taking another look at

some of what has happened in your own life can help explain why some of you or someone you know is living with the effects of abuse, even though there may not have been sexual contact involved.

A final point: When working with abuse issues, we challenge people to not go digging around in the past just for the sake of finding something. The only reason for addressing abuse issues is to find resolution to the ways past abuse is having an affect today. An example, if a person was betrayed in their childhood by a person who was supposed to be safe, they may have difficulty trusting people today.

God wants to heal these places of pain in the lives of men and women. I pray that you will be touched by God in those dark, wounded places. I pray that you will serve as the hands of God to help others who have been hurt as well.

¹ Dr. Dan B. Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, (Colorado Springs: NAVPRESS, 2008), pg.47

² Allender, pg. 47

³ Allender, pg. 48

⁴ Allender, pg. 48



Prepare for Right Risk-Taking!

by Mary Heathman

This article will explore how to prepare for *Right Risk-Taking*. (See sidebar for reference to the first two articles.)

According to William Treasurer (2003), there are four principles that must be addressed in order to prepare for taking Right Risks: *Find Your Golden Silence*, *Defy Inertia*, *Write Your Risk Scripts*, and *Turn on the Risk Pressure*. Using some of the author's points, I will de-

(Continued on page 4)

(Right Risk-Taking continued from page 3)
velop these principles from a discipleship perspective, two this month and two next month. Hopefully, in the process we will find some useful tools for personal growth.

Principle One: Find Your Golden Silence

On the facing page of this chapter, Treasurer uses three quotes:

“Pure and still,
one can put things right
everywhere under heaven.” Lao Tzu

“In the attitude of silence

Article One and Two in the Current Series:

The first, *Abundant Life = Taking the Right Risks*, stated my opinion that living the abundant life involves risk-taking—taking “Right Risks.” I referred to a book, *Right Risk: 10 Powerful Principles for Taking Giant Leaps With Your Life*, by William Treasurer (2003), as a practical explanation of right risk taking.

The second article, *What is Right Risk-Taking?*, distinguished Right Risk-Taking from gratuitous or ego-based motivations for taking risks. Contrasting the two, Treasurer says that Right Risk-Taking must be driven by passion, purpose, principle and prerogative (intentionality), in order for it to be the right risk at the right time for the right reasons. See previous articles for more details on this background.

the soul finds the path in a clearer light,
and what is elusive and deceptive
resolves itself into crystal clearness.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“Silence is golden until. . .
it screams right through your bones.” John
Prine

I would like to quote from a classic that
predates all of the above writers:

“. . . In quietness and confidence
will be your strength. . . .” Isaiah 30:15

“The Lord will fight for you;
you need only to be still. Exodus 14:14

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm
46:10

Treasurer equates silence with Right Risk-Taking because he knows that it is in the quiet places of our minds that we can access our inner-most awareness of ourselves, our “inner gold” as he calls it. It is here we listen to ourselves and find the motivation to take action based on our own convictions, not in reaction to the other voices that pummel us from all directions. Here, in the silence, careful and prayerful reflection has the best chance to inform and form our wills—so the practice of a receptive silence should always “precede purposeful action” (p. 42).

Referring to the awkwardness and difficulty of achieving stillness, the author states what I, as a Quaker, have believed for a long time: “The more frenetic and complicated our world becomes, the more important is silence to help us get centered” (p. 48).

Three things you can do to access your “inner gold.”

(Continued on page 5)

(Right Risk-Taking continued from page 4)

1. Start each day with 5 minutes of uninterrupted silence.
2. Turn off your radio while driving to and from work . . .
3. Select a sacred space. . . spend time there monthly.

Principle Two: Defy Inertia

As quoted by Treasurer (p. 50):

“The chains of habit are
too weak to be felt until they are
too strong to be broken.”
Samuel Johnson

“I like the word ‘indolence.’
It makes my laziness seem classy.”
Bern Williams

Biblical quotes:

“The [lazy one] craves and gets nothing;
But the desires of the diligent are fully
satisfied.”
Proverbs 13:4

“A [lazy one] does not plow in season;
so at harvest time, he looks,
but he finds nothing.”
Proverbs 20:4

Newton’s law of inertia states that “a body at rest will remain at rest and a body in motion will stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force.” Whether the issue is laziness or inertia, risks must be taken to resist the status quo that is pulling us back into inaction or indecision.

Ways to defy inertia

1. Make sure that the risk you are considering is anchored to your core interests and passions; when we are enjoying the activity it is easier to start and to stay with

it. What are you most passionate about? Take action in that direction.

2. Push past the question, “What’s in it for me?” and start asking “What’s the cost if I don’t take this risk?” At that point, it will become painfully clear that “inaction is the greatest risk of all.”

3. Respect and feed your dreams; risk-taking is the main way our dreams come out of the unreal world of our imaginations and into reality. If we take no risks, we have few fulfilled dreams.

4. Get a coach/counselor/mentor to help you along the journey to where you want and hope to be.

5. Become comfortable with the discomfort; **defying inertia requires moving out of our comfort zone.** Settle in and learn how to be uncomfortable for longer and longer periods of time.

Next month, I will explore Treasurer’s principles of preparing for *Right Risk-Taking* by *Writing Your Risk Scripts*, and *Turning on the Risk Pressure*. In the meantime, may the Lord who risked it all, the God who spent Himself, to redeem us, help us make space for silence and find our “inner gold,” and strengthen our resolve to “defy inertia” that keeps us from growing.

Treasurer, W. (2003). *Right risk: 10 powerful principles for taking giant leaps with your life*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Playing Fair~A Bad Idea?

By Scott Kingry



"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:17-18

I really don't know how my parents managed it. Two kids to divide up daily activities, gifts, time and attention, all with hopes everything would somehow come out equally. One thing they knew for sure was that if things weren't doled out the same between the two of us, there'd definitely be hell to pay. A common battlefield where this occurred on a frequent basis was in the arena of chores. My parents, with their 1950's sensibilities, were from the school of teaching their children quickly and early the responsibility of helping maintain the home we were privileged to live in (and I'm very glad they did!). But this soon became a creative endeavor, for if my younger brother or I felt we had just one more plate to wash or the dusting took less time than the vacuuming, the typical phrase was screamed "That's NOT fair!" and the squabbling would begin.

I'm not sure where this notion of life having to be "fair" exactly originates—is it a development of maturity, as in the case of the squabbling siblings? As if life would virtually end if someone had one more chore to do or got one more gift? Could it be cultural?—with the ease and affluence America provides that everyone is entitled to a ribbon whether or not you've actually achieved anything

and that everyone is guaranteed their fair share of the pie?

Fairness does seem like a reasonable notion after all, we love people who play fair and dislike those who don't. I'd imagine the roots of this belief system are varied and complex. As Christians, I think we add another level of complications. We assume that since God is a God of justice that He must deal with us "fairly," when the truth is that fairness and justice are not necessarily the same thing. In fact, biblically speaking, I'm not sure how we equated this belief to the very big, mysterious God we serve. Losing your life to gain it, loving those that hate you, rain falling on the just and unjust, or whether you're the offended one or the offender, it's always your job to right the wrong as you leave your gift at the altar. This just doesn't seem like God is letting us settle for things being "fair" in our lives.

"Here's all you have to do to ruin every relationship in your life: Play fair."

The above quote is from Dr. Henry Cloud from his book entitled *"9 Things You Simply Must Do"* (you might recognize his name from his better known work *"Boundaries"*—which we use often at WGA). Cloud explores 9 principles that, when applied, will hopefully help you improve and find more success in your relationships—the concept of "Playing Fair" being just one of the principles. Dr. Cloud advocates that rather than just giving back what we receive in relationships (whether that's anger, re-

(Continued on page 7)

(Playing Fair continued from page 6)
venge or even love), that Christ is calling us to go beyond our need and give back better—that our “goodness” and “maturity” aren’t contingent on whether or not people are good or mature to us. What a concept. Here are a few of his thoughts on “not playing fair”.

Get Rid of Anger

“Successful people know this—they do not blast people with their anger. They take a third route, which is using their anger to let the other person know that there is a problem. Then, they go and solve the problem by approaching the person in love, not anger, and facing the issue at hand. They are not doormats at all. But they fix problems in a way that treats the other person better. In doing so they become allies with the person to solve the problem instead of enemies trying to win.”

Get Past Your Own Need

“Unmet needs in a relationship create frustration, and you cannot be helpful to someone else when you need something from him or her. For example, when you need to be listened to or cared about, or supported, that is when your friends, community, counselors, and support systems are vitally important. Do not simply go without having these needs met. Successful people see life as a place to give—they are not giving just to get something back. When a person takes the high road and helps a wayward spouse, sibling, partner, or friend mature through love and enforcing limits, they often get someone mature in the end for their sacrifice. This does not mean you are a pushover and allow destructive things to just go on without notice. But it does mean you face these things in a way

that does not add another injury to the score.”

Give the Opposite

“Often we sabotage the possibility of getting what we want by giving exactly the opposite. It happens when we give just what we are given—when we are “playing fair”. For example, a friend disconnects and detaches. As a result, you withdraw your love. You pout or get mad. You withhold affection when he comes to you later. To give better would mean that you do not withdraw connection, but seek him. Instead of punishing, ask what is wrong. See if you’re doing something that is driving him away. It solves nothing to return a lack of connection for a lack of connection.”

These are relatively simple concepts to understand on an intellectual level, but often that clearheadedness sure does change when it comes to actually applying them. Playing fair is easy and that’s why the road is wide with folks (Christian or not) willing to follow this ideal. I laugh when I think of when someone is yelling at me in traffic and giving me the one finger salute, how difficult it is to keep my mouth shut and my fingers on the steering wheel—I can just barely do it as everything in me would like to return the favor!

These are wise words from Dr. Cloud, but we are often reminded from scripture that our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak, and we need to pray and seek the help of the original Author of “not playing fair” and His Spirit to rise to such an occasion. Sure would have been helpful for my parents on chore day, I’d imagine.



December In Review

December 28th—January 1st: WGA participating in Friends Summit

December 4th: Intercessory Prayer

Thursday Night Group

December 2nd: 41 people

December 9th: 43 people

December 16th: 35 people

December 23rd: 34 people

December 30th: 35 people

Orientation meeting - 3 new people

January And Beyond

January 1st: WGA presenting at Campus Crusade Event

January 6th: Men's Commitment Group Begins

January 11th: Survivors of Abuse Group Begins

February 5th: Intercessory Prayer. Join us from 8:00— 9:00 am at the WGA offices

February 11-12th: WGA staff/leadership are teaching a conference on "Love Addiction" at The Next Level Church. Contact the WGA office for more information

January 18th: WGA presenting to the staff of Inner City Health Clinic

Financial Update

Praise the Lord! He (and you) have been generous! While we don't have exact figures just yet, WGA ended 2010 in the black, showing a profit for the year. More detailed information will be available on this soon. Thank you so much for your faithful prayers and support

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 2011