

Journey to



LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11



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THE NEWSLETTER OF ADVENTIST RECOVERY MINISTRIES, sponsored by NAD Health Ministries

MARCH / APRIL 2013 • Volume 2, Number 2



Editor's View

No gods Before Me

Then God instructed the people as follows: 'I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship any other gods besides me. Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish. You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god!' Exodus 20:1-5

The church is filled with a wonderfully diverse group of men and women. Members from diverse cultural backgrounds, men and women, and young and old make up our church family. We comprise God's people from around the world, people with the same hurts and hang-ups, strengths and weaknesses as other human beings.

I believe that one of the greatest challenges to the church today is idolatry. We don't have gold statues hidden in our saddlebags and would never think of worshiping gods of stone, metal or wood, but we are nonetheless creative in our present-day forms of idolatry. Broken people are driven to build idols of control, self-dependence, performance, self-comfort and people-pleasing. These idols tell God that somehow He is not strong enough to handle our situation. When we are hurt, we medicate our pain by turning to food, sex, work,

drugs, television, videogames, and many other compulsive thoughts, attitudes and behaviors to help us to feel better. By doing so we tell God that He is a poor comforter rather than the God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3).

I believe that the command to "not worship any other gods besides me" is in the first position of the Decalogue because idolatry is foundational to all other sins. When we peel back the layers on other sins, we find some form of idolatry at their root. As a people called to minister to the world, would it not be good to take the lead in asking God to search our hearts and to cleanse our hearts from all forms of idolatry? They keep us from effective, powerful and Spirit-led ministry.

A few years ago I had a wonderful Christian neighbor. Brother Leroy Phenix and I became good friends as we worked and prayed together. As I confided some of my challenges to him one day, he said "It's repenting time, brother." He was right, and more than that, it is time to truly die to the idolatry in our lives, that we might fully allow God to live his life in and through us for such a time as this. ■

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ARMin Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

Our Vision:

Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God's Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

Potential Objectives/Goals:

- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God's Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life's trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ's forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy. ■

The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

Step 7 —

“Humbly asked
God to remove our
shortcomings”

Biblical Comparison

“Create in me a clean
heart, O God.”

— Psalms 51:10 (KJV)

Upcoming Events

March 15-17, 2013 - Plan now to take the official NAD *Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMin)* training at the next NAD Regional Health Summit in New York City on March 16-17 of 2013. To learn more and to register please go to www.NADHealthSummit.com and you will find info on how to register. This training will help leaders to understand principles of recovery how to use the new *Journey to Wholeness* resource for support groups at churches, schools, or other centers of influence.

April, 2013 - Hope Channel and Adventist Recovery Ministries Launched Unhooked - Adventist Recovery Ministries and Hope Channel teamed up to produce *Unhooked*. A TV series highlighting the stories of dozens of people with compulsive addictive behaviors and addictions who found hope for recovery in Christ. See the trailer for *Unhooked* at www.adventistrecovery.org and click on: Launch ARMin in Your Church Today link.



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #7

The first word in this step speaks to the attitude the addict must have in approaching God. Humility is the key. For so long, we believed that we could manage our own lives. We did not need God’s help with our addiction. Whether it was through ignorance or arrogance, we thumbed our noses at God, and in doing so, declared to Him that we knew better that He did how to be God. Now that we have learned that self dependence does not keep us addiction free, we humbly turn to Him and ask God to remove our shortcoming.

Asking is an action step. Here is something that we must do. There are things about recovery that only God can do such as give us the power to restore us to sanity. However, God know that there are steps we must take on our own behalf through which we show that we understand our need for him. In the seventh step, asking is a concrete demonstration of our need for God’s help.

What do we ask? That He remove our shortcomings. When making this type of request, it is best to be specific. In the 4th step, we identified our defects of character. In the 5th step we confessed to God and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Through the 6th step we became ready to have them removed. In this step, we ask that the specific shortcomings we’ve identified be removed. “Lord, please remove my pride, remove my bitterness and resentment, remove my sense of guilt over having hurt you, others (name them), and myself. Lord, to the best of my understanding today, I am ready to have you remove these sinful, hurtful shortcomings, and I am asking you now to do so. I believe, by the power of Jesus blood, shed on the cross for my sins, that you will do as I have requested, in Jesus name. Amen” A prayer such as this, God will never ignore, and will always act upon. He’s just been waiting for you to ask! ■

Starting a Recovery Program

I first heard of the Journey to Wholeness 12 Step Christ-centered recovery program at the Wimbish SDA church family in the summer of 2011 when Frank Sanchez, Southern Union Coordinator held an Awareness Sabbath. It was a tremendous blessing to the members and visitors. Several people expressed their interest in having a program established at the church.

After much prayer, discussion, and church board approval, the program got started on Wednesday, January 9th, 2013. The initial ARMin meeting was well attended with a group of ten individuals, six church members and four visitors. I volunteered as coordinator. I was motivated to start the program because of his own experience in overcoming my own twelve year addiction to crack cocaine. I gave a brief testimony to the participants sharing the power of Jesus Christ to overcome any addiction. The steps, I told the group, were exactly what I went through in my own walk from crack to Christ. Everyone was visibly encouraged and became more relaxed and open.

The evening continued with the explanation of how the meetings would be conducted with emphasis on the fact that everyone is strongly encouraged to participate; and participate they did. Attendees introduced themselves as, “I am a child of God, and I am struggling with....” A variety of issues, besides drug and alcohol, were shared. Individuals freely volunteered their personal experiences and admitted how unmanageable their lives had become because of their addictions. They expressed their appreciation for the program and vowed to continue to attend.

One attendee, a church member, admitted that his wife had been urging him for some time to read the book, *Steps to Christ*. He gleefully remarked, “I will certainly be reading it now”. *Steps to Christ* is of course one of the main resources of the program. The program plan is to do one step for four weeks followed by a testimony of one of

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The Root and Fruit of Freedom From Addictions: Part II How Jesus' Suffering Brings Hope and Healing to Your Story

Why would Jesus choose to remind His disciples continually that He “must suffer, die, and rise again” at the beginning, middle, and end of His ministry, and again immediately after He rose again? Why would Jesus include so much suffering in His plan of salvation anyway? (Luke 9:22; 22:25; 24:24-26; 44-46; Heb. 2:10, 17-18).

If you have experienced the pain of being alone and abandoned—Jesus has been there when His disciples deserted Him in His time of need.

If you have been betrayed and/or abused physically, emotionally, or verbally by others who abused their positions of authority—Jesus has been there when the religious leaders and soldiers stripped Him naked and abused Him in every way possible (Is. 52:14).

If you have been tempted to numb your pain in your deepest, darkest moment and tempted to believe that God or others have forsaken you—Jesus has been there when He hung on the cross, carrying our sins, crying out “Why have You forsaken Me?”

Because Jesus has suffered in “every way” we have (in principle), He can identify with us, He can connect His story with our stories. Whenever we realize that someone else has gone through a similar experience, we tend to increase our hope and trust. That means that as we see the ways Jesus has experienced

everything we have, our wounded hearts can begin to trust our Wounded Healer, who fulfilled prophecy not only to suffer like us, but also to “rise with healing in His wings,” (Mal. 4:2).

Practical Application

So how does this apply to Rick? Years ago when I met him, and when you met him in our last article, Rick had a problem: he was addicted to porn. But in Part I we also learned that wherever a negative behavior is—or a negative fruit—there is a false belief system—or a negative root. And we learned that to receive lasting healing, we must deal with our roots.

As Rick came to find out, his problem had started in childhood with Satan planting lies such as “I’m rejected,” “I’m not good enough,” and “I’m alone” (John 8:44). Twenty years later it was threatening his marriage.

At the point where we left him, Rick had identified his negative thoughts, but he still needed something more. He had heard that Christ was the answer to his problems, but he still couldn’t see how. Jesus had died for his sins, but how could He help Rick with his cycle of sinning, then asking forgiveness, then sinning over and over again? Below, we summarize Rick’s story of finding healing and freedom by identifying with Christ. (You can read the complete version in our book, *The Hidden Half of the Gospel*.)

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Resources

Journey to Wholeness:



A series that can be used in support groups or small groups as a resource to

facilitate recovery of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Journey to Life Newsletter:



This bi-monthly newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and soon in French as well. Print a free pdf copy, download, or register to subscribe and receive it via email at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Choose Full Life Resources:



These are posters, calendars/bookmarks, booklets that can be used to share with others 10

Ways to Choose a Full Life embarking on a Journey to Recovery. For more information and to place an order please go to www.NADHealthMinistry.org and check out the online store. The Choose Full Life theme song is also available for download.

News

- A new ARMin 12 step group for men has been formed at the Village SDA Church in Berrien Springs, MI. The group meets at 7:00 pm on Thursday. If you are in the area, come by and experience the safety and welcome of a Journey to Wholeness group.
- The Roosville SDA Church in Roosville, GA sponsored an ARMin Awareness Sabbath on February 9, 2013, conducted by Frank Sanchez, Southern Union ARMin Coordinator.
- The Berean SDA Church in South Bend, IN sponsored an ARMin Awareness Sabbath in January 2013, conducted by Ray Nelson, Michigan Conference ARMin Coordinator.
- The January Health Sabbath webinar focusing on ARMin was recorded and can be accessed at www.nadhealthsummit.com under “resources” tab and the webinars link.



Starting a Recovery Program *continued from page 2*

the participants on the fifth week before moving on to the next step. Additionally, it is planned that a different participant would moderate each step.

According to the program outline, participants volunteered to individually read the Credo, Steps, and Traditions. Collectively the group repeated the Serenity Prayer, Pledge, and Promise. Most of the evening was spent talking about the First Step, recognizing the powerlessness and unmanageability of a life of addiction. Appropriate Bible passages were read as participants freely, sometimes emotionally, share their acceptance of this fact.

The Wimbish ARMin program is destined, by God’s grace, for great success as determined individuals overcome their struggles through the power of Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal of the program is not only to help with overcoming addictions; but developing a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Aubrey Duncan.

You can get more information on setting up a program at your church by visiting: <http://www.adventistrecovery.org/> or send an email to adventistrecovery@nad.adventist.org

Featured Article *continued from page 3*

Jesus is the Root of Healing

As Rick and I (Paul) prayed, we connected the “root” of Rick’s pornography to the negative messages he received growing up with all the ways Jesus was tempted to believe that He was *alone* and *not good enough* when He was *rejected* as the “Root of David who has already” gained the victory (Heb. 42:17-18; 4:15; Is. 53:2-4; Rev. 5:5).

Ellen White recognized the importance of this type of ministry as well, saying: “The work of restoration can never be thorough unless the roots of evil are reached. Again and again the shoots have been clipped, while the root of bitterness has been left to spring up and defile many; but the very depth of the hidden evil must be reached, the moral senses must be judged, and judged again, in the light of the divine presence. The daily life will testify whether or not the work is genuine” (YI, December 22, 1898 par. 4-6).

As we continued kneeling at the throne of grace week after week, the simple—yet supernatural—power of Jesus’ story connecting with Rick’s story began to “renew his mind” (Heb. 4:16; Rom. 12:2). And Rick was finally able to thank Jesus that he was receiving Jesus’ forgiveness, as well as Jesus’ purity, goodness, and acceptance (Acts 5:30-31), instead of trying harder to do what he was already unable to do in his own strength.

While our discipleship process gives more details on the ways we can move from information about Jesus’ gospel, to application to transformation, each of us can have the same freedom Rick found. Freedom that moves us into ministry, with a testimony.

(You can find more information at our website: www.straight2theheart.com).

By Paul Coneff and Lindsey Gendke. excerpted from their book “*The Hidden Half of the Gospel: Connecting Our Story To Jesus’ Story*” to be released in the spring of 2013. Paul is the director of Straight 2 the Heart’s non-profit prayer and discipleship ministry. Lindsey Gendke began working with Paul after hearing him speak in her church and then taking his thirteen-week prayer and discipleship training. Lindsey is a freelance writer and former high school English teacher who holds bachelors and masters degrees in English.

Director’s Message



Last month ARMin authored an article that was published at the Adventist World magazine in an effort to raise awareness of the ministry and the importance for churches, schools and hospitals to become involved. We had a tremendous positive response from readers . Many contacted us interested in starting a group in their local church and seeking training to be equipped to do so.

We praise God for the opportunity to train anyone who is feeling called to help others break away from these compulsive unhealthy behaviors and become unhooked from these painful addictions by pointing them to Christ as the source of power to do so.

For anyone interested in starting a group please go to www.nadhealthsummit.com and register to attend the “12 steps to wholeness” seminar, under track 2 (March 16-17). We hope to see you there!

Please send us an email with suggestions and comments. We would love to see every church with an ARMin group, as we seek to have each church be a center for health, healing and wholeness. ■

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