

April 2009

Monthly Musings

from Brother Jeff



Staying on Course

Did you know that most of the time a commercial airplane flying from one city to another is off track? Factors such as wind, rain, turbulence, and air traffic act upon a plane and move it off its prescribed flight path however so slightly.

For the plane to arrive at its proper destination, the pilot must make directional corrections throughout the flight. Newer planes are equipped with navigational systems which make these corrections automatically. In older planes, pilots must make such adjustments manually based on feedback received from instruments that read the environment, from control towers, from other airplanes, and even from the stars.

The story of our lives isn't much different. We may set out for the heavenly city, but the cares of this world start pulling us in multiple directions. Before we know it, we find ourselves headed down the wrong path.

And it doesn't necessarily take some major sin per se to get us off course. Normal things like work, paying the bills, raising kids, taking care of the house, and a host of other worthy things can distract us from what really matters, and we end up in an undesirable place.

So what can we do to prevent this and stay on course?

The book of 1 Corinthians gives us the answer. The church (for whom the book is named) started

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Testimony

by Brian Champine



"I was raised in a dysfunctional home. My dad was a 'functioning' alcoholic. I was subjected to constant verbal abuse.

Consequently, I developed a perfectionist attitude to cope with my feelings of inadequacy.

I began playing the guitar at an early age. Music was a place where I could find temporary release from the turmoil of everyday life. I also found acceptance with others when I played.

At 23 years of age I was in a severe car accident. It took three years of plastic surgery to put me back together. During this time I began to drink, and for the next twenty years I struggled with depression, insomnia, and severe bulimia-nervosa.

I tried everything man had to offer to overcome my painful and destructive lifestyle. I went through 32 rehab centers, 8 psychiatric centers, and numerous hospitalizations. I tried AA, NA, CA, OEA, and every other self-help group I could find, but I always ended up the same way – addicted and hopeless.

I got married in 1996. I thought marriage would hide the fractured person I really was. A year later, however, I fell apart. I was admitted into the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for bulimia. I weighed 106 lbs. My wife could not cope with these ongoing problems, and within 2 years of our marriage we were divorced.

In 2000 I overdosed on alcohol and ended up in the critical care unit. I had flat-lined and was on a respirator. ***I was so tired and empty. I couldn't kill myself...and I couldn't live.***

I made a call to a friend who told me about Life Challenge. A few days later I was enrolled in the program. While there I met and secured a relationship with Jesus Christ. I was equipped with the necessary tools to be a successful, productive person and part of Christ's great commission.

After I graduated I knew I was supposed to do an internship but didn't want to. I went my

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Staying on Course (continued from page 1)

out well. Pioneered by Paul himself, she was founded on sound gospel truth. The Apostle acknowledged that the Corinthians were “enriched in every way . . . not lack(ing) any spiritual gift” (1:5, 7).

But on their journey, problems began to slowly creep in. Division. Sexual immorality. Lawsuits between fellow believers. Marital crises. Drunkenness. The list goes on. The church lost her way. In the midst of all this confusion Paul talks about the importance of gathering around the Lord's Table in memory of Christ's broken body and shed blood (11:17 ff.). This partaking, this contemplating, was to serve as built-in corrective, keeping the Corinthians pointed toward their true North.

The same holds for us. Christ's death and our regular remembering of His death is the God-ordained “directional corrective” to our faith.

Here are just a few of the correctives the cross provides:

Christ's death is telling proof that God loves us: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).*

We need a constant reminder that we are loved and wanted. Our on-going failings as parents, employees, neighbors, etc., can eat away at our sense of self-worth. Knowing, however, that God in His Son gave His very life for us—while we were *still* sinners—gives us much needed security and comfort.

Christ's death is the foundation of our forgiveness and justification and, therefore, hope and peace: *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2).*

Christ took my guilt and punishment and reconciled me to God. I am no longer condemned and under His wrath. I am forgiven, justified, and adopted into His family. I am a joint heir with Christ. As such, all the blessings Christ merited through His

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ALUMNI UPDATE



Adam Zbozien, class of '99 wrote us recently, “A few years after completing the program I joined the army as a Cavalry Scout. At the moment I am on my second tour to Iraq. . . . If not for my time (at Life Challenge) I would surely be dead today. I am very grateful for the time I spent with you and have withstood the storms of life through the foundation of the Word planted in me there.”

Testimony (continued from page 1)

own way, and it worked for a while. But the backsliding got worse.

By August of 2007 I was homeless, jobless, and in a pile of legal trouble. After a 10-day stint in a psychiatric ward, I headed back to Life Challenge. I was welcomed with love and kindness. God had brought me full-circle back to where He wanted me to be.

The Lord has been so rich in mercy and grace towards me. He loved me when I was unlovable. I finally listened to the voice of God. I completed a re-entry program and did a six-month internship. I am now on staff as the music director. All glory and honor to Him!”

“Our regular remembering of His death is the God-ordained 'directional corrective' to our faith.”

Staying on Course (continued from page 2)

perfect obedience are mine. What could make me happier?

Christ's death assures us that God will withhold nothing good from us: *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32)*

God's giving of His Son (and the Son's willingness to be given)—an incomparably great thing—is guarantee that He will withhold from us no good thing (as everything else is small by comparison). Whether the good be tribulation, famine, or sword (as the context of Romans 8 suggests) or deliverance and rest, God will spare no expense to give us what is truly good.

Christ's death models how we all are to suffer: *"But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:20b-21).*

I was asked the other day by an upset student, "How much more abuse do I have to take from so-and-so?" I told him to look at his wounded Savior. The Christ of the cross shows us that we must not retaliate. Instead, we must bless and do good to those who would do us neither.

Christ's death humbles us: *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities" (Is. 53:5).*

We know we're not perfect, we have our hang-ups. But we're not *that* bad, so we think. Christ's death tells us otherwise. The cross reveals our sin and just how evil our sin is. There is nothing more pride-shattering than looking upon a broken, beaten, bloody Christ.

SUMMARY

So many things in life compete for our attention—many good in themselves. If we are not intentional, we will drift off course. But proper fixation on the crucified Christ will keep us on the right path.

*"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."
(1 Corinthians 2:2)*

ASK THE DIRECTOR

Q: What is one of the most frequent family-related problems you see?

A: Co-dependency. Time and again, I have seen grown men brought in, defended, and supported by their mother (or wife). Is it any wonder little "Johnny" (an adult) acts like a juvenile when his mother treats him as such? My advice: "Let go. Treat 'Johnny' like a man. He needs to learn consequences and accept personal responsibility. Your involvement only prolongs the pain for everyone."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Our 8th Annual Golf Scramble
is scheduled for
Monday, June 22
(9:00 am start)
at the
Tanglewood Golf Course
in South Lyon

More information coming

**We would love to come to your church
(or school, business) for a presentation.**
Please contact Debbie for a booking (313.531.0111).

Thank you for your partnership with us
in providing the only hope this world has –
the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Time: 7:00 PM

*\$15.00 per person
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