

The GABRIEL

Winter 2013

The Magazine for Christians in Recovery



ISSUE FOCUS

JOY

The Gabriel

FALL-WINTER 2012

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We are happy to provide this copy of The Gabriel as a "free-to-share" magazine. Feel free to email or print it to share with others. The Gabriel and articles in whole or in part may not be reproduced for sale or profit.

All articles are written by individuals who are in recovery. These articles reflect the personal views of the authors and not Christians in Recovery as an organization. The authors share their own personal experience, faith, strength and hope with the desire to benefit the reader and the reader's own recovery. Please take what you need and leave the rest."



Christians in Recovery®
Your Internet Community for Recovery
Always Available, Always Caring

The Gabriel is a publication of [Christians in Recovery®](http://www.christians-in-recovery.org) dedicated to the uplifting and inspiration of it's members and friends. It is published 4 times a year, once each quarter.

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Christians in Recovery®, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. We are a group of recovering Christians dedicated to personal one-on-one sharing of faith, strength and hope as we live each day in recovery. We work to regain and maintain balance and order in our lives through active discussion of the 12 Steps, the Bible, and experiences in our own recovery from abuse, family dysfunction, depression, anxiety, grief, relationships and/or addictions of alcohol, drugs, food, pornography, sexual addiction, etc. CIR is comprised of people like you who become [Members](#) and/or [Donate](#). CIR is governed by a [Board of Directors](#) that meets on a regular basis.

Our Vision

It is the vision of the Board and Supporting Members of CIR to continue to use the latest technology, in addition to conventional means, to reach those who would normally not seek help--to catch those who fall through the cracks-- and to further spread Christian hope, healing and fellowship to those in need of recovery. Our vision is not just recovery but **to go well beyond recovery** so people can fully discover, explore and magnify all possibilities God intends for them as individuals.

Christians in Recovery® is NOT:

- A crises center or hotline
- A substitute for attending church
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- A substitute for professional help or assistance
- Geared to any one denomination
- Intended to replace secular recovery groups or meetings
- Intended to replace or undermine any other Christian organization or group.

<http://www.christians-in-recovery.org>

Dancing for Joy

I guess I have been the editor of *The Gabriel* for at least 15 years and in all that time have never been able to publish a Christmas Issue. That dream has come true in this Christmas Special Winter Edition!

"They" told me when I first came into the rooms of recovery that if I stayed clean and sober "things would happen beyond my wildest

dreams". I - little 'ole me from the Deep South - have toured the Canadian Rockies with a sponsee! I've been able to keep the same job for over 20 years (an impossibility for my pre-recovery self) AND I've been the editor of a Christian Recovery Magazine that goes out to thousands via our website, Christians-in-Recovery.org. WOW!

If anyone had told me 22 years ago that I would be able to do all these things - not to mention all the others that life has brought - I would have immediately gone into panic mode: "Oh dear. I don't know how to do that." "How would I get there, pay for it, survive it, insert-you-own-it!" BUT my God has been gentle working with my life one day at a time.

Isn't that what the Bible said? That "He was gentle and humble in spirit"? Today instead of fretting and fussing that every typo is fixed and every word correct I think I will "Dance for Joy" that CIR now has a CHRISTMAS ISSUE!! And pray heartfelt prayers that something in here might help you in your journey through the holidays. That you might be able to bypass that "just one drink" or "just one treat" or "just one fill-in-the-blank" that has kept you prisoner to your addiction or dysfunction. That God would truly bless your heart and mind with HIS LOVE. HE has given me a lifetime of gifts and I know has as many or more for you too!

I leave you with just one suggestion: Dance for Joy. Dance every day. Dance in your mind. Dance in your Heart. Dance in your Spirit. Ask God to Dance with you... for we ARE found. We are in recovery. Praise God for His loving mercy.

Have a blessed Holiday all!
ClaraT, Editor



The Dance of Life

Filtering fearful defenses



The Gabriel's Associate Editor, Jim Aquila, brings us a wonderful article this month on relationships "Jim's Table". We hope you and your family will be blessed with his insightful perspective.



Whatever we call this filter, it becomes a barrier between ourselves, and the wealth of information that begs to be released through our five senses, sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. All of which become windows of opportunity, in which our senses invite us to experience our lives fully. I firmly believe that this is one of the most difficult lessons that we are asked to learn. The scripture passage, *"Verily I say unto you, except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Luke 18:17*, is quite an eye opener for those who have opportunity to observe little children and their behavior. We can come to a realistic conclusion that they have a much better grasp of reality than

adults. With little children there are no defenses to alter what their senses perceive. You are who you are to them. They view everything as new and they accept this newness without need to be filtered through preconceived notions and biases of others. This unbuffered connection invites us to be as open and fluid as little children. In addition, when we are in a state of denial it limits our own spiritual nature, which causes us to become static and not more open and fluid.

One of the gifts of Native Americans is their intimacy with the natural world. For example, they use ritual and vision quests to discover the "animal" that most emulates their desired behavior. From an early age, they learn and eventually incorporate the animal's characteristics into their psyches. These are not heathen rituals as some would say because in doing so they are expanding their vision, learning to call on others for help and strengths that may otherwise remain dormant, just seeds of potential.

Now, if this new behavior turns your world upside down, prying you out of your box of denial in order to see and experience life from another's point of view, then you are destined to remain in a world of having to say I'm sorry for your every behavior. You will

not know the joy of empathy. You will subject yourself to a small uninformed state, eventually becoming paralyzed and fearful to any inner challenges simply because it may rearrange your habitual patterns- that many call addictions. However, if we commit ourselves to practicing empathetic behavior, eventually it will become a natural inclination to be open and truthful.

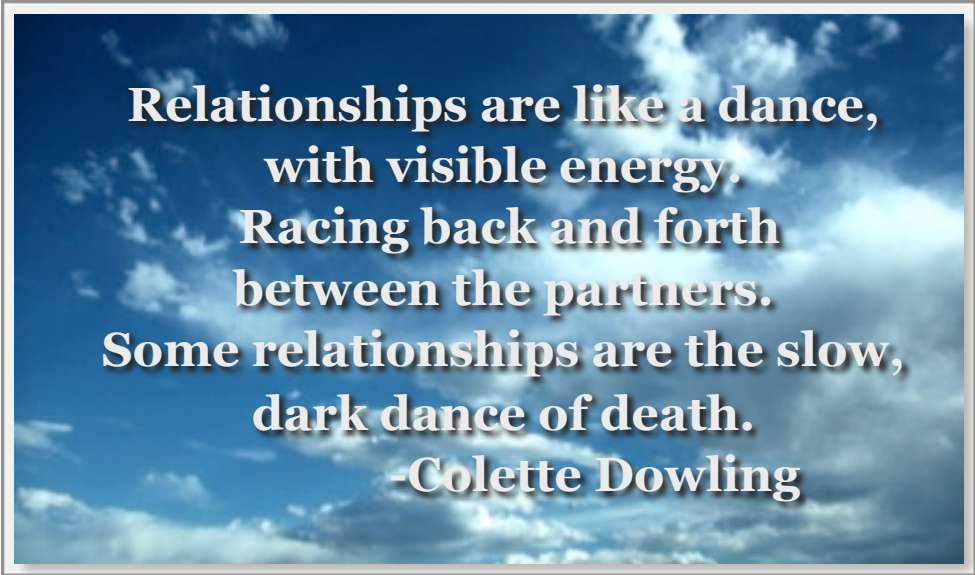
For the sake of clarification, an addiction does not necessarily mean just the abuse of one or more substances, but also includes any thought, action or behavior that is regularly repeated without concern of the consequences that thought or action may bring upon their self or others.

In this broad definition, we can include the addiction to love, to knowledge, even the addiction

of attending meetings at the expense of our personal needs or the needs of our family. Yes, even the emotion of FEAR can be addictive. For each addiction, you pay the price in loss of happiness and clarity in life.

As addictive behavior continues, the walls that protect your body begin to crack... those inner walls of the mind and spirit- eventually the hammering effect picks away at our armor and will lead to chronic over-stimulation of our nervous system, suppression of our immunity, and literally cause adrenal exhaustion. However, in our physical and mental confusion there is a wonderful thing that happens. There is an involuntary dismantling process where the mind and body has reached an

continues on next page



**Relationships are like a dance,
with visible energy.
Racing back and forth
between the partners.
Some relationships are the slow,
dark dance of death.
-Colette Dowling**

impasse (rock-bottom so to speak), and survival takes over. At this point, the mind and the body reduce its headlong race into oblivion. What a wonderful process this is because there is no greater tragedy in life than hiding behind or pretending to be something that we are not, or living a life that is less than our full potential. If we are living a life that is untrue to spiritual values, the Spirit of God will not let us rest until we step back onto our true course.

The time comes when we can no longer find refuge in our defenses. Because of our challenges, we discover that it is our defenses, our fear factor that keeps us in darkness! We tire of straining to protect ourselves, and we feel stifled and restricted by the walls we have built between our hearts and those

around us. This is where fear of discovery takes over. The fear we keep locked in our heart is not worth the love we lose in hiding. We cannot afford to maintain a life of fear at the cost of peace. In our efforts to keep pain away from our heart, we have also denied entry of joy into our lives. The moment arrives when we must break free and take a stand for who we are. That moment is now. The time has come to cast aside our cloak of smallness and put on the robe, which honors our true spiritual nature. We must claim the strength to live in the dignity befitting our identity.

We may even use the affirmation- "I free myself from the security, sensation, and the power of addictions that make me control situations in my life and destroys my thinking and

keeps me from loving myself and others."

The choice of accepting happiness and living a life of joy is an internal choice, not the result of our external circumstance. It is our internal emotional programming that must be changed. The wonderful thing is that it is fully within your ability to do so- whereas up to now you have been hopelessly trying to manipulate the outside world to conform to your compulsive behavior and then spend your time making choices on a preference basis - that being - 'What's in it for me.'

It is my prayer that you have seen value in this article to motivate you into action and begin to express that inner beauty that we all possess.

Dr. Aquila is an author/teacher and Nutritionists. He has authored five books and several pamphlets on addictions and their effect on relationships, by using vitamins and herbs. James also writes other articles appearing in Celebrate In Recovery and The Gabriel. For additional information James invites you to write to him here: jaquila@sbcglobal.net

Want to find more articles on CIR by Dr. Aquila or any of the other Gabriel authors? Just do a search of CIR's Archives. Here's how:

(see Navigation illustration to the right)

Go to our website www.christians-in-recovery.org.

Using the Search Site link, enter the author's name

You can even enter a subject you're interested in.

Also look for the Daily Articles (Free!) at the right side of the homepage and the handy links at the p of the page : Issues, Tools and Compass Points.

And links on [CIR's Facebook Page](#). Easy!

Look for the search box at top right of [CIR Homepage](#):



Accountability... Who Needs It?

Published December 23, 2011 | By [Daphne](#)

The Gabriel is delighted to present Daphne Tarango our newest contributor to CIR and The Gabriel. Don't miss her personal message to our readers and members at the end of this article.

My heart hurts, I have a knot in my throat, and I want to cry.

I've just learned that a dear friend—one I haven't talked to in a long time—is now leading a self-destructive lifestyle.

My heart hurts for her. I never would have imagined this. I saw a picture of her today and she looked...totally different from what I remember.

I know she is responsible—as are each of us—for our actions, but I've got to wonder... Where were her friends—myself included, her family, her pastor? Did anyone talk to her about the road she was headed? Did anyone even bother to ask her what was wrong? Even more, did she seek out help? Did she feel safe enough to say she was hurting? Did she...?

Dear one, I don't know the answers to any of those questions. But it certainly reminds me of experiences in my life when I was hurting. Divorce. Depression. Trauma. Illness. Did anyone approach me and ask what was wrong? Did anyone say, "I've noticed you are having a difficult time. Do you want to talk about it?" Did my pastors counsel and encourage me? Even more, did I seek out help? Did I feel safe enough to say I was hurting? Did I take down my mask of seeming perfection and share my struggles with trusted friends? Did I...?

Some of these answers might be, "Yes." Others might be, "No." And yet others might be, "Kinda."

Regardless, silence prolongs pain—mine, my friend's and yours.

"When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long" ([Psalm 32:3](#)).

I know it can be awkward to approach someone about their personal struggles, but wouldn't we want the same?

"Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path" ([Galatians 6:1](#))

Article continues on next page



Dear ones, we are not meant to fight our battles alone.

“A friend loves you all the time, and a brother helps in time of trouble” ([Proverbs 17:17](#)).

“Two people are better than one, because they get more done by working together. If one falls down, the other can help him up. But it is bad for the person who is alone and falls, because no one is there to help. If two lie down together, they will be warm, but a person alone will not be warm. An enemy might defeat one person, but two people together can defend themselves; a rope that is woven of three strings is hard to break” ([Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#)).

If you are hurting, reach out to someone—a friend, family member, coworker, pastor, or a counselor.

If you see someone hurting, reach out. Please come alongside them. Please love them. A hurting person is just that—a real person, someone’s son or daughter, someone’s husband or wife, someone’s friend—God’s creation.

None of us is exempt from suffering. None of us is exempt from temptation. None of us is exempt from falling ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)).

A complete [bio](#) and list of Daphne’s [articles](#) & [blogs](#) to date may be found on her website:

<http://blog.daphnewrites.com>.

E-mail: daphne@daphnewrites.com

Twitter: [@Daphne_Writes](#)

Daphne writes a personal message to our Gabriel Readers in the next column. Feel free to email her to share your thoughts.



I have recently found the CIR website, and The Gabriel.

I would like to thank you personally for undertaking such a ministry to those who are affected in

one way or another by any number of addictions or struggles.

I myself am in recovery from a number of things, including depression, codependency, bipolar depression disorder, chronic pain, fear, and workaholism, among others. My calling, as you can see from my signature, is to comfort others with the comfort God has given me in my years of recovery.

I wanted to introduce myself first and to share with you some links to my work. You can see by some of the titles that my work is geared toward recovery and empowering others to take steps to personal freedom in Christ. I would like to call your attention to the specific articles below, published in various magazines:

- * [No More Shame](#)
- * [Coping with Change](#)
- * [Choosing When and How to Reveal My Heart](#)
- * [Are We Beyond Help?](#)

I want to be a good steward of what God has entrusted to me. As such, I want to use as many avenues as possible to deliver words of comfort and encouragement to those who might need it.

Blessings,
Daphne

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

— 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

He is All

You're my music in the morning
You're the joy that brings the dawn
You're the sun that warms our faces
When the winter's bearing on
Warm me 'til my lonely shivering
Heart's inspired to kneel and pray
And I look to joyful dawning
On that final brightest day.

In tumultuous times of trouble
May we still Your songs employ
To dispel the growing darkness
That would all our faith destroy
When we feel our strength receding
May we still then seek Your face
In the midst of our heart's bleeding
Send us oceans of Your grace.

You pour out Your sweet libations
Lord how great Thou truly art
Onto thirsty errant nations
Your sweet fragrance You impart
Lead us to the Living Water
Until all our fears have fled
And bestow Your manna presence
Until all our souls are fed.

On the evening of our journey
When the knock comes at the door And
we find the raven quothing
"Child awaken, nevermore",
May we then flee to Your rafters

There escape the
threshing floor
Leave the raven to
the raptors
While our Captor's
love adore.



On the morning after mourning
When all heaven starts to sing
And we're bathed in loud "Hosannas!"
Adorations to our King
May our voice grow ever louder
While on sea of glass we stand
As our past is ground to powder
Blown away by His command.

To the Alpha and Omega
To the Love that gifted Life
To the One who marched through history
Bearing burdens, stalking strife,
May Your name last on forever
'Til our earth falls into sun
While on distant banks we gather
Where our river first begun.

~ * ~

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See more works at Roadrunner's web site
Furtherreaches.com*

CIR Poets In Residence

I held onto bad memories because they were there.
I held onto anger because it was mine...
I held onto wrong relationships because they were
better the no relationship at all.
Courage is letting those things go and facing the
future which is today with Christ.
I didn't have courage before Christ.
I had attitude.

I had anger.
I had fear.
Now i can choose what to hold onto and
what to let go of.
I don't have to hold onto pain and shame.
The choosing is the beginning of
freedom.
The freedom is walking in those choices

~ dulcinea



Playing with Dirt

Published September 12, 2011 | By [Daphne](#)

When I bought my house, I fell in love not only with the house but also with the playground next door. It wasn't much of a park, but I pictured it a great place for my future family to play and make memories. Once I moved in, I enjoyed hearing children playing, giggling, and laughing hysterically outside my office window.

Then, the city came and uprooted all the playground equipment. Both sets of swings—gone. The empty park crushed my spirit. Seeing the kiddos sit on the dirt piles after school grieved me even more. But most of all, I missed the giggles, the laughter, the sweet sounds of childlike innocence.

Weeks and months passed, and the children visited the dirt pile often. Eventually, they learned they could play with sticks, leaves, and well... dirt. It might not have been the old playground, but it was what they had; this was now their playground.

Several weeks ago, a semi-truck pulled up outside my house early in the morning. I watched as groups of men lifted heavy objects out of the truck and carefully placed them around the dirt piles in the playground. One trip, two trips, three trips... I lost count. In the end, large objects filled the old playground. I couldn't tell what these items were, but something told me a new playground would be taking shape.

Days passed and little by little, a new playground appeared. The workers raised the playground up from its earlier incarnation and covered it with fresh

mulch. Jungle gyms. Slides. Treehouses. And yes, swings. Even park benches and tables.

Before long, children reappeared.

- The laughs!
- The screaming and yelling!
- All music to my ears.

Dear one, life is a lot like that playground. We play and we laugh. Then something—or someone—comes our way and tears down all we know and love—the things that make us laugh hysterically and shriek with delight.

- Divorce.
- Illness.
- Death.
- Broken relationships.
- Abuse.
- Job loss.
- Addictions.

We're left with dirt—piles of it.

We visit the site of our happy memories often, hoping that somehow they'll magically reappear, and life will be joyous again. We long to laugh again.

Eventually, we move on. We learn new ways to live and play. We learn how to make the most of our dirt. It's not the life we know, but it's the life we have.

It seems that when we move on and learn to work with our dirt, God pulls up in His divine semi-truck and starts positioning bits and pieces of a new playground in our lives. It might be a short season of

rebuilding—or what seems like an eternity. But before we know it, we have a new playground—a better playground than what we once enjoyed.



Dear one, God wants to restore what was taken from you (Joel 2:25). Your suffering won't last forever. Our generous God has great plans for you—and what great and glorious plans they are! As you live out the life you have, He will put you back together and on your feet for good (1 Peter 5:10). He will make beauty from your ashes (Isaiah 61:3). God will let you laugh again (Job 8:21).

A collage of images related to the CIR ministry. It includes a computer screen showing a website, a CD with a blue cover, and a book titled 'Bible Aid'. The background is a textured, reddish-brown surface with yellow and green accents.

CIR
Workbook &
Meeting
Guide

Bible Aid

Thoughts, Scriptures & Prayers

Journaling

12 Step Studies

Pray for the ministry of CIR !

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[Learn more about Sponsoring the CIR Web Site](#)

We Must Have Grown Up In Our Sleep

by Bob H. Cook, circa 2000

It seemed to mark the end of summer,
The school bell rang and it was gone.
So many friends to share the moment,
How the days drug on and on!

We didn't know that we were changing.
We thought today was ours to keep.
Lord, what happened to tomorrow.
We must have grown up in our sleep.

Mary smiled, and my heart fluttered,
So many things I never said.
But the kisses that I dreamed of
Were for someone else instead.

Puppy love may be for children,
But the hurt goes just as deep.
We said goodnight and woke up strangers.
We must have grown up in our sleep.

(Bridge)

All the stars that light the heavens
Aren't the ones we saw before.
By the time we saw the sparkle,
They weren't up there anymore.

Home was like a piece of heaven
Where everything would tum out right,
And every day was like a diamond
That we cashed in for the night,

We'd trade today to gain tomorrow
And sold our yesterdays too cheap.
The morning came and we were older.
We must have grown up in our sleep.

(Repeat Bridge)

A little boy woke up, an old man.
We must have grown up in our sleep.

Poet's
Corner

poem: #14

DIAMONDS, HORSES, AND GRASS

Bob H. Cook, 2/19/2011

If you find yourself losing the joy in your life

And your blessing is more like a curse
And you wonder what's wrong with that
sweet little girl

That you've taken for better or worse,
You look at her now and hear yourself say,
"All she does is gripe and complain."

But maybe if you took a look at yourself,
You would find what exactly has changed.
Now, you didn't used to call on that girl
With chicken hanging out of your teeth,
Your pants undone and your hair not combed
With whiskers you've had for a week.

You'd take three baths and put on cologne,
Shine your shoes and wax your car.

Then, you'd stand at a mirror and work on
your hair

Till you looked like a Hollywood star.

You'd buy her candy and flowers and gifts
And ask her what she'd like to do.

Now, you drop in a chair and turn on the
game

While she brings your supper to you.

You'd brag on her cookin'; you'd brag on her
looks,

And she did the same in return.

Now, the only time you even notice at all

Is if she happens to let somethin' burn.

If the other man's grass is greener than yours,

It's because it's been tended and mowed.

A good horse'll die if she never gets fed.

She wasn't just meant to be rode.

So, bring her some candy; write her a poem.

Treat her like she's still your bride.

And that old lump of coal you thought was
burned out

Might still be a diamond inside.

Ask God to help you to care for her needs,

And make her the queen of your world.

And when you fall for her...just like you did
before,

You'll know why you married that girl.

The Poet's Corner this Issue is dedicated to a very special CIR friend, Bob Cook, whose poetry was submitted to us by one of our members, Chuck, who communicates with us from prison. We thank Bob for generously sharing his poetry for the Winter 2013 Issue of the Gabriel. We hope you will be inspired.

The Battle

When Jesus was taken down from the cross,
Satan called his counselors in.
He called the meeting to order and looked own at the three,
And the first that he called on was Sin.
"Oh Sin, you've let me down this time.
Why couldn't you pull Him away?
For thirty-three years you tried, and you failed.
Not once did He falter or stray.
Then He picked you up like a little whipped pup
And took you to Calvary with Him.
Then He knocked you down with one single punch
And paid for the sins of all men."

As Sin sat down in shame and disgrace,
Satan looked at Circumstance.
"Old friend, can you tell me how in this world
Did you miss such an excellent chance?"
"But Satan, I hit Him with all that I had:
He was hungry and lonely and poor,
Beaten and spit on, rejected of men;
I've never worked harder before.
Then today people mocked Him, laughed and made fun,
And He forgave all their blasphemous yells.
And then, when they nailed His hands and His feet,
I found out He was tougher than nails."

"Sit down, you fool," Satan cried out!
And he paused for a moment or two.
Then he called the Grim Reaper, the one they call, Death,
And said, "Mister, now, it's up to you."
The Grim Reaper laughed and rose to his feet,
"Old Friend, you have nothing to fear.
No man alive escapes from my grasp.
They run every time I draw near."
"Well, hold on to this one especially tight,"
Satan, then, cried out to Death.

"Don't worry, my friend," the Reaper replied,
"This Jesus has drawn His last breath."
The meeting adjourned, and the day slowly passed,
And Death came to Lucifer's door,
"I told you that Jesus would never escape.
He'll not trouble you anymore."
Then the second day passed and Lucifer laughed
And lifted a toast to his friend,
"God is defeated, darkness has won,
And righteousness comes to an end."
..

Then the third day crept forward and Satan rejoiced
And laughed at how God was disgraced,
But as the day ended, Death knocked again,
And there was no smile on his face.

"I can't understand it; it doesn't make sense,
But this morning as dawn was to break,
A light shone from heaven, and I couldn't move,
And I felt the ground tremble and shake.
Then the stone rolled away, and Jesus stepped forth,
And His eyes, like fire, met mine.
He said, 'Death, you're defeated. Your power is gone.'
And I was scared for the very first time."

"Incompetent fools," Satan cried out,
"Is all left for me now, to do?"
"Yes, you'll have your chance," the Reaper replied,
"In the end you must battle Him too.
One day, you will meet Him, as I did today,
Those eyes, like a scorpion's sting."
Satan then trembled as fear filled his heart,
For none was a match for the King!

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What Is That In Your Hand

by Bob R. Cook (1994)

What is that in your hand?
It's only a stick
That I found in the desert
Where brambles are thick.

*If you have the faith, Son,
To give it to Me,
In it lies the power
To set people free.*

What is that in your hand?
It's only a stone.
I sling it at tree limbs
When I'm all alone.

*Give it to Me, Son,
Along with your sling.
In it lies the power
To make you a king.*

What is that in your hand?
It's only a sack
With two little fishes
That my mama packed.

*Give it to Me, Son
Along with your bread
And thousands of people,
Today, will be fed.*

These earthly possessions
That I used to ho'd,
Once given to Jesus
Are worth more than gold.

No weapon against me
Is able to stand.
I'm more than a conqueror!
What is that in your hand?

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THIRTEEN PEOPLE DIED TODAY

by Bob H. Cook, 2/25/2011

Thirteen people died today.
Now, some might say that's sad.
A lot more died in nine-one-one;
This wasn't all that bad.

None of them were college kids,
No mothers and no dads.
Thirteen people died today,
But it wasn't all that bad.

Now, none of these were famous folks,
And none wore wedding rings.
In fact, they'd never had a chance
To accomplish anything.

They couldn't write the alphabet
Or multiply by twos.
Thirteen people died today,
But it won't be on the news.

They never learned to ride a bike
Or how to bounce a ball.

I guess, nobody even knows
That they were here at all.

They'll have no final resting place
No pretty words or tears.
Thirteen people died today.
Were they ever really here?

A doctor helped them on their way,
A man who's trained to heal.
They'll never sense their mother's touch
They won't know how that feels.

Ripped out of their mama's womb
And tossed into the trash,
Thirteen people died today.
Will that be charge or cash?

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UNCHAINED MERCY

lyrics by Bob H. Cook
(may be sung to "Unchained Melody")
3/4/11

Oh, my Lord, my Savior,
I've hungered for Your touch
A-long, lonely time.
But sin holds on so tightly,
And sin destroys so much.
Will You be mine?

I need Your love!
I need Your love!
God, speed Your love to me!

(chorus)

There's a River flows
To the sea, to the sea,
Drowning all my sin in the sea
Jesus freely chose
He would be, He would be
The One Who took my place on
Calvary!

(musical interlude; repeat all)
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The Poet's Sonnet

*A withered leaf upon a bough
Held fast against the wind,
Doctors passed and learned men,
But none had time to spend.*

*Yet someone stands with pen in hand
To write the things he sees,
That all the world might see the leaf
And feel the Autumn breeze.*

*I cannot take a dying child
And help her find relief,
But I can see the hand of God
Upon a withered leaf.*

*The world beholds what greatness brings,
But poets see the little things.*

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ANSWERS

- [Our "Pet" Sins: Can a Christian be a Christian and still sin?](#)
- [Holidays are so difficult; Can I just stay home?](#)

TIP FOR SUPPORTING MEMBERS

- [Learn How to Get the Most from Your CIR Membership](#)
Not a CIR member yet? [Learn the Benefits of Membership](#) [Join us: Click Here](#)

HELP FOR RECOVERY

- [God Chases Runaways](#)
- [Surviving the Holidays: Some Tips for People in Recovery](#)
- [Twelve Steps to a Better Holiday Season](#)

FOUND ON THE NET

"I needed to break free from all the prisons I put myself in. Shame, embarrassment, fear, anxiety were the guards and the bars that kept me locked up." [Click Here for a very insightful article](#)

Share the CIR News with Your Friends!
Reach your faith-based market and support the ministry of CIR at the same time Over 80,000 unique Web site visitors and half a million page views every month. Over 7,000 subscribers to this newsletter.
[Learn more about being a Sponsor of the CIR Web Site](#)

TOOLS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- [Free Online Videos on Each of the 12 Steps](#)
The 12 Steps have long been of great help to people in recovery. Much of their power -comes from the fact that they capture principles clearly revealed in the Bible. The following page lists the 12 Steps and connects them to corresponding Scriptures that support them. This will help readers familiar with the 12 Steps to discover the true source of their wisdom—the very word of God.

DID YOU KNOW?

- CIR has a [Youtube Channel](#)
- If you would like your testimony uploaded please [Contact Us](#)

WISDOM FROM A CIR MEMBER

Every day is a choice for me. I have the choice to drink or not, to drug or not, to try to fulfill my self-centered needs or to serve Christ. Today I choose to serve Christ.
~Oswin

RECOVERY EVENTS, COURSES & CONFERENCES

- [NET Institute Center for Addiction Recovery & Education](#) offers certified online courses and training DVDs. Get certified to help others.
[Complete Course Listing](#)

- **City Vision College** Offers Online Courses
Get accredited bachelor's degrees in Urban Missions and/or Addiction Studies
[Enroll Now](#) || [Download Course Catalog](#)

Contact: Rachael Jarboe
TechMission and City Vision College
<http://www.techmission.org>
<http://www.cityvision.edu>
Phone: 816-960-2008 City Vision College Academic Office
Email: rjarboe@cityvision.edu or rachaelj@techmission.org

- [SoulCare 101](#) for Pastors, Counselors and Friends
Enhance your personal or professional ministry through this course as you learn how to engage in other people's lives at a meaningful level and make a lasting difference. Join Dr. Larry Crabb in this course which focuses on the inner life, where we become who we were intended and long to be.

FOR RECOVERY PROFESSIONALS

- [Tough Love in Addiction Recovery Programs](#)
- [Motivating Addiction Recovery Program Participants \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Motivating Addiction Recovery Program Participants \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Motivating Addiction Recovery Program Participants \(Part 3\)](#)



Self-helpSoftware.com

Focus on CIR

A Testimony: Depression, BPD, Unmanageable Anger, Suicidal Thoughts



I am 47 years old now. One of the greatest difficulties I have found in coping with BPD - in addition to

experiencing all emotions in a very intense manner - is my severe anger-control problem. I have also struggled with deep, dark, suicidal depressions - sometimes lasting for many months. Intense, agonizing anxiety has been another symptom of this disorder that has created great pain in my heart, and which has led me to isolate myself for a great part of my adult life due to my phobia of social settings and general anxiety whenever I am not in my "safe zone", which means my apartment. There are many other symptoms of BPD, but my greatest life-controlling issue for over 25 years now and, I believe, the most damaging manner in which I manifest borderline personality disorder - for myself and for those closest to me - is my out-of-control anger and rage.

For most of my young adult and adult life, I did not think there was

The Christians-In-Recovery website has over 3000 pages. Hidden among the articles and Message Board and Tools for recovery is a page where our own members share their testimonies. They vary from a few heartfelt lines to entire testimonies as the one below. BAPearl (her CIR nick) has graciously agreed that we publish her story here. You can find the stories and thoughts of other recovering Christians [here](#).

any hope of overcoming my lack of self-control regarding anger. However, this all changed when I became a born-again Christian in 2001. It was then that I learned that the Lord IS my Hope, and that *"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."* 2 Timothy 1:7, NLT. So I knew I had within me God's Spirit of self-control and sound-mindedness, but I had no idea of how to **develop** this fruit so that I was not manifesting anger and rage. In addition, I did not receive teaching about my own personal need for willingness and surrender, so for several more years I continued to live with a deep sense that there was something deep missing within me - or that somehow I was deficient. And I began - once again - to feel defeated.

However, God is good and faithful to His Word, and He heard my cry to Him for help. He led me to a church that is open to those who are hurting with deep inner wounds. And on one of the lowest nights of my life, when I was on-line searching for an effective way to commit suicide, God - in His infinite mercy and grace - led me instead to CIR. And it has been since joining CIR and the caring church that teaches the Bible and how to walk in the Light of Christ's

Light that I am beginning to understand just how vital it is to my healing to surrender my will, my mind, and my emotions - including my anger - over to Him **willingly** and **absolutely**. For me, it is this process that is leading me ever-deeper into the Love of Christ and my Abba Father. It is also a process that is vital to my very existence, my dear friends, because my anger, my outbursts of out-of-control rage have gone from self-abuse in the form of self-injury to the abuse of those I love in the form of verbal, mental, and emotional abuse. I grew up in such an environment, and I promised myself that I would never do to those I love what was done to me - this abuse that led me to feel so worthless, shameful, fearful, and to think I was blame for all the pain of those around me. But I held onto what was done to me; the deep in my heart - I held onto that hurt, that pain, that bitterness, that refusal to forgive. And just as Jesus says, *"It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth.... Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer. But the words you speak come from the heart - that's what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual*

immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you."
Matthew 15:11, 17-20, NLT

My dear CIR family, it has only been in being **accepted** by my husband and by you, my new friends here, and being **loved unconditionally** that I have been able to grow in Christ, and come to this place of honest sharing. Today, I find myself in a place of brokenness, but also of joy and new hope in Jesus. I am broken because my words have so deeply wounded my husband, who I love with all my heart. I had so desired to give him love - the agape love of Christ that would return the love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and so many other beautiful things that he has showered on me in our nine years of marriage and nearly sixteen years of being together as a couple. Unfortunately, I have given him much grief and pain through my life-controlling fears and shame and my choice to hang onto my past that have led me into a life of raging against myself and those I love, including my dearest friends and family members.

I believe that
all things are
possible
with God

For the pain I have caused to God, to them - and to myself - I am deeply grieved and sorrowful. I repent and I ask the forgiveness of God and of those I have wounded in my anger, including myself. I also ask for your prayers for my husband, our families, friends and myself as I seek a new beginning by surrendering with 100% willingness my mind, all of my emotions, and my absolute will into the hands of

my loving God, Lord, and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I know and I believe that all things are possible with God, and it is only in fully surrendering myself to Him and continuing to

surrender daily - minute by minute - seeking Him with all that I am that I will find freedom and be set free in Him - the Truth Who shines His Light into my darkness and transforms my darkness into His Life and Love flowing in and through and out of me! Praise be to Jesus my Lord and Saviour, and thank you to all of you for reading my story.

With love, hugs, and prayer from
your sister in Jesus, BAPearl

Testimonies About CIR

The Testimony Page at CIR contains unsolicited, direct quotes from real people who have been ministered to by CIR, in addition to video testimonies and a link where you can add your own testimony.

Though Jesus Christ, CIR impacts lives, saves lives and changes lives.



Tell a Friend about CIR and give them a FREE Membership too!

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Over 7,000 subscribers to the CIR Monthly email newsletter.



Christians in Recovery®
Your Internet Community for Recovery
Always Available, Always Caring

CHANGES THAT HEAL BOOK STUDY

**Meetings are each MONDAY in CIR Chat
8:30PM ET | 5:30PM PT 1:30AM GMT/UTC
[Click here for more information](#)**

The Angel Jeffrey

by William Warszawski

We are delighted to introduce another new Gabriel author, William Warxzawski! Mr. Warszawski lives in Rhode Island with his wife and two children, has been sober 29 years, returned to the Church of his youth just prior to his 50th birthday, and occasionally inspects the tires on his car. He can be reached at BillW15@aol.com".



He was an anomaly in our small town on Cape Cod, having moved there a year after I had. "He's Jewish, you know," a classmate confided. I realized I had not heard mention of a Jewish holiday since leaving Connecticut, where about one-quarter of the class would be out of school on such days. "Good," I thought. "It feels more like home now."

We never became more than acquaintances during high school years. But whenever we met, Jeff got me laughing, snapping me out of some unexplainable teenage funk. He seemed well aware of this ability, and employed it at every opportunity. I never complained.

Two years out of high school – three for Jeff – we crossed paths again.

I was home from college for the summer, working as a truck driver for a hardware and marine supplies wholesaler. My routes covered all of Cape Cod, and part of southeastern Massachusetts. It didn't pay much, but served as an enjoyable way to spend the summer, traveling to marinas around the Cape, interspersed with an occasional hardware store, bait and tackle shop, or lumber yard. A favorite challenge was to squeeze the truck down Commercial Street in Provincetown, on which parking was allowed to the right and one-way traffic proceeded to the left. The narrow travel lane sloped to the left, causing the top of the truck to scrape an occasional utility pole.

By this time I had developed a significant issue with alcohol. When not working, I spent too many evenings at my favorite gin mill, The Bridge Café. And I had a habit of 'burning rubber' on my '66 Catalina wagon every chance I got – just to get a laugh from passengers or onlookers, with no concern for my tires.

At the end of a routine evening, during which I stayed to near-closing at 'the Bridge,' I was driving east toward home. As I started to climb a hill, the car swerved. I didn't realize it, but I most likely blew a rear tire, and reacted improperly by hitting the brakes. This caused the swerving to exaggerate, resulting in a turn of more than 90 degrees to the right. The big wagon slid sideways,

toward the right shoulder, stopping when the driver's door broadsided a cross-walk sign.

Talk about one of life's sign posts.

I don't know how long I sat there, or if I'd had a period of unconsciousness.

I heard a knocking to my left and looked up. Things were blurry, but a face came into focus: 'Oh, my God! Jeff!'

I don't remember getting out of the car. Somehow we magically switched places, and Jeff was now at the wheel attempting to back my wrecked vehicle off the top of a street sign that was bent over like a blade of marsh grass under tidal water. With a rocking motion – as if stuck in snow – and some more burnt rubber, Jeff got it out, and then backed it into a parking lot across the street.

Then I noticed he had no car of his own. I guessed he must have been hitchhiking home at 1 A.M., but I didn't ask.

People started to gather. One man said, "I called the police," as if he had done me a favor. I became livid, snapping, "What!? What'd you do that for?" Then I immediately climbed into the car and drove the last mile home, flat tire and all, thinking I could escape a driving-under charge.

I parked where I normally park.

I must've blacked out after that. I have no recollection of going into the house or going to bed. My next recollection is my father woke me: "Bill! Bill!!! Get the fucking alcohol off your breath! The cops are downstairs!"

It came back to me in a hurry. I got up and brushed my teeth, then went downstairs.

The 'cop' was one of the summer cops – always dubbed rent-a-cops by my father – employed by the town during the busy tourist season. The surprise was that he was someone I knew well, from drinking and drugging escapades of our own. But he was all business now. This was awkward.

I was charged with leaving the scene after causing property damage. 'Good,' I thought. 'My little plan is working.'

continued on next page



It occurred to me later that I could have taken the plan a step further and hidden the vehicle on the back of the property. There was enough land and plenty of buildings to do so. Maybe I would've escaped any encounter with the law. But doing so hadn't occurred to me during that crippled drive home.

The summer cop commenced to read my Miranda rights. Before he could finish, a senior officer walked in, and exclaimed, "OK, that's enough." The senior officer seemed more at ease than the summer cop, who later would tell me he had driven around in his patrol car for an hour before doing what he knew he had to do: knock on our door. I hadn't spoken to him for years, but I knew he had done the right thing and told him so.

In front of a judge, a plea of nolo contendere ended the affair. This was an option I had become aware of by studying the annual town report books as a kid, never expecting it would come in handy. No lawyer, no anybody – I went by myself. I paid a meager court cost and was told I'd get billed for replacement of the sign, but the bill never arrived.

I made no attempt to contact Jeff, not to thank him, or to apologize, or to even to joke about it. Maybe I was too embarrassed. I did know that I was free to go on as before, and that's all I cared about. To me, this was just an instance of Murphy's Law. I had no reason to think things would ever go so wrong again. I was sorely mistaken.

Years later, Jeff contacted me after reading something I had posted on Classmates.com. He could tell from what I had written that I had been in recovery for many years, and told me he had been as well. This struck me. For one thing, I'd had no idea he ever had a problem. But once he came forward, I realized he was the first person who had known me from my youth, saw how things had deteriorated, and understood what it was like to recover from that fate. I had already discovered the bond that existed among two people who live to tell of such a turnaround – like survivors of a shipwreck – but the connection ran deeper with someone who'd known me from a young age.

We started to correspond. Maybe it was no coincidence that Jeff was the first person to discover me at that accident scene. Maybe he needed to see the event as much as I needed it to happen, as the first of several wake-up calls. Jeff agreed.

It also occurred to me that maybe Jeff was as bombed as I was while backing my car out of that ditch. Once again, Jeff agreed.

We corresponded sporadically. We discussed our adopted home town, our respective college years, careers and families, and our current whereabouts. He had been in California for many years working in the music industry. I asked him music questions on behalf of my son, and he told me stories about touring with rock stars, especially Carlos Santana, for whom Jeff also served as sort of a personal assistant.

We also discussed bottoming out, and recovering. Philosophically, we differed as to what constituted legitimate sobriety, but we did not let that come between us.

Jeff described a degree of alienation from some people he had once felt close to. He didn't blame anyone, seeing it as his own doing. But he was perplexed as to how to solve the problem. He felt he had made progress with some individuals, but other relationships remained damaged. He described the sensation of a cloud over his head, and that being in California added to the difficulty. I said, "Please tell your own story, because now you're telling mine," for I had been perplexed by that same cloud for years. Now sunlight seemed to be piercing through, if for no other reason than we had some understanding of each other.

We talked of a visit to California, as my family and I had once unknowingly driven near Jeff's town while visiting my wife's uncle in Santa Rosa, and we'd been contemplating a return trip. But we never firmed up any plans.

A mutual friend's Facebook post alerted me to a problem. I went to Jeff's Facebook wall and studied a handful of cryptic posts, then asked for more detail. Soon afterwards, Jeff's younger brother posted an announcement: Jeff was gone.

Too late for that visit now. I was left with a sense of regret for having procrastinated. 'Never again,' I thought. Still, I was grateful for what contact we did have, and that it had continued to the end.

I wrote a brief tribute and posted it on Jeff's wall. People seemed to like it, and a friend asked if I'd ever been published. Had he seen my Verbal SAT scores, he would've known how funny that sounded to me. "Ah, no," I replied. "Well, you should try," he said. "I always find myself thinking about the things you write." So I said I'd first try to publish this expanded tribute to Jeff.

It seems even in death my brief encounters with Jeff are nudging me in a different direction. I suspect none of the encounters was accidental.

Rest in peace, Jeff. And thank you.



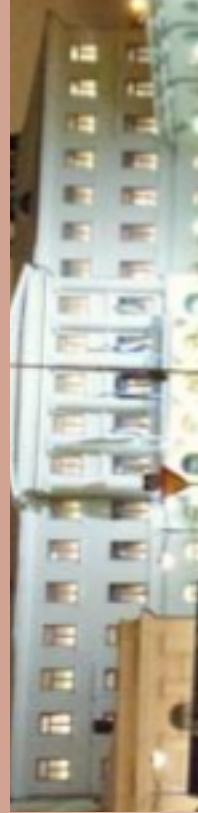
★ The LORD is my light and my salvation..the stronghold of my life – whom shall I fear? ★

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

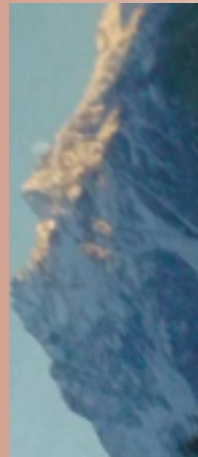
GLEANNINGS

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another path.

CIR all around
the world!



Independence Day in Finland



Mountain from Wasilla, Alaska



Stockholm, Sweden

"He is no fool who gives
what he cannot keep, to
lose" (Jim Elliot)

Attitude is everything! Starting with my attitude toward God. How important is He to me? Is He EVERYTHING? or nothing.....

How is my attitude toward others? Is it Christ-like? or self-centered?

How is my attitude toward myself? Do I respect my own self as a beloved child of God? or do I debase and degrade myself?

These are all questions we have to ask ourselves.

Note from the Editor:
The quotes around the edge of the page and many of the ones on the page are member's signatures in the CIR Forums.

Our gift to you.
Each one reach one!

★ Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you. ★

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God..I will strengthen you and help you.

In small things ~ Love greatly. ★ If you had known me before I knew Him, You'd understand why I love Him

★ I think Holidays are hard in the beginning of recovery but they get easier over time.★



Horses at Dulcinea's Critters

One thing that really helped me in the beginning was to limit my time with people, places and things over the holiday season. I could always plan going to a meeting or catching up with recovery friends right after a difficult social event. That kept me balanced and also gave me an excuse to leave!! Another thing I did was drive myself to any event I went to. That way I could leave as soon as I felt uncomfortable or tempted.

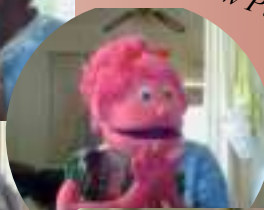
Proud Grandpa
Teddybear !



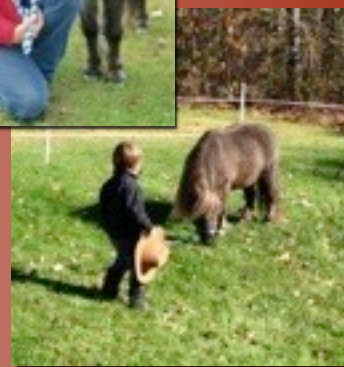
The
Miracle
Child!
Jack is
4 years
old!



Noreen's New Puppets



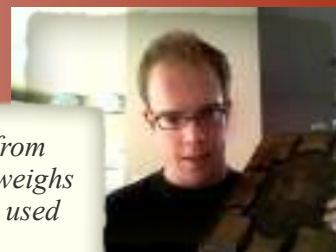
Ruth & Daisy



CIR in good company! A proud moment.



A family bible from about 1880. It weighs about 10 lbs! it used to be owned by ILoveSoccer's Great-Great-Great Granddad, who was a deacon in the church.



★ But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. (Psalm 3:3)

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, "You, too? Thought I was the only one." ★

What If Christmas Isn't Merry?

What pops into your mind when you think of Christmas?

Colored lights, tinsel, festive decorations? Familiar music, parties, family gatherings? Joy, the promise of a Savior, God with us?

How about death, loss, and grief? That's probably not what you expected.

Christmas is a time for glad tidings of great joy, but we also must be sensitive to those for whom the holiday invokes painful memories and highlights difficult circumstances. This isn't the cheeriest of holiday greetings. I hope you'll forgive me for reminding us that we're likely to encounter folks that can't quite share our holly-jolly spirit.

When I began teaching I was struck by a predictable rise in discipline problems between Thanksgiving and Christmas break. It took a while to understand that, for some kids, that two-week break was anything but the most wonderful time of the year. Family expectations, increased alcohol use, and financial stress lead to increased conflict. Those kids dreaded being isolated in often violent and abusive situations.

My best friend passed away last December 23rd. I'm sure his wife and son will experience periods of profound sadness amidst piles of wrapping paper.

I know folks who will be alone for the first time this Christmas. Divorce, death, kids moved away, husband's deployed in Afghanistan—lots of

reasons to find some loneliness and despair beneath the tree.

For many years December was a really tough month for me. My injury happened on December 5th, and you can imagine that memories of Christmas in the ICU with screws in my head didn't exactly make succeeding holidays an occasion for excited anticipation.

However, I'm also living evidence that God redeems and heals painful circumstances. As I began writing this, I realized that December 5th had passed un-noticed. And my story about my hospital Christmas is that the nurses decorated me—they hung Christmas ornaments from the screws. Hospital humor, I guess.

God is gracious and patient and relentless—hey, that would make a good book title: *Relentless Grace!* He didn't give up on me, and he'll work for good in troubled situations this year as well.

But even knowing that doesn't make the darkness disappear for folks who are in the middle of the storm. We don't have to hide our own celebration, but I hope we make time to listen to those who look at the baby in the manger and wonder where He went.

My one suggestion—don't try to make it all okay, because right now it's just not all okay. Don't offer platitudes and catchy

scripture passages that are somehow supposed to turn that frown upside-down. People who are hurting don't need cheering up as much as they need someone to listen without judgment or expectation.



I've said before that some of the most bizarre statements I've ever heard came from well-meaning Christians who wanted to provide a tidy explanation for a horrible, senseless accident. If someone's hurting, you won't help by assuring them that it's all part of God's plan. That's not what they need.

What do they need? You.

We all know one person who needs someone to have lunch or a cup of coffee or a beer with them over the next two weeks. Call that person. Listen and laugh and cry and let them share the pain and the memories. It might be uncomfortable, but it'll be okay.

I'm thinking it might have been a little uncomfortable for God's Son to leave Heaven for a smelly stable. But that's what He did, because He knew some hurting people who needed Him.

This shouldn't be a depressing reminder. Following Jesus in real life means encountering some mud and potholes and hurting people along the road. I don't want to be a Pollyanna Christian who crosses to the other side and misses the joy of servicing and listening.

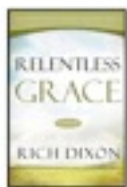
It'll be hard sometimes, but it'll be okay.

Who do you need to call?



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Rich is an author and
speaker. He is the
author of:

[Relentless Grace: God's
Invitation To Give Hope
Another Chance.](#)
Visit his web site
www.relentlessgrace.com



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Founded in 1948, [Alcoholics Victorious](#) support groups offer a safe environment for people recovering from the effects of alcoholism or drug addiction. We recognize Jesus Christ as our "Higher Power" and gather together to share our experience, faith, strength and hope. AV meetings use the [12 Steps](#), the Bible and the [Alcoholics Victorious Creed](#).

Need help? [Contact Us](#)



a program of

Christians in Recovery
<http://christians-in-recovery.org>



*Co-Dependent's
Holiday Prayer*

Father, thank you for this joyous season.
Thank you for sending Jesus to die for me
So that I could live forever with you.

God, you know how anxious I get during the holidays.
Help me not to look for approval from anyone—
Not about presents, events I plan, events I attend,
Not even about the way my home should look.

Help me not to let anyone's frenzy zap my serenity.
I might feel the urge to rescue others from
their over-commitments, Lord.
Help me to restrain myself.

Help me not to try to please others by putting myself
and my family on the backburner
While spending so much time on what others might want.
Lord, give me the freedom to let my family be themselves—
Not to control their behaviors and appearance.

Help me to be myself,
Regardless of what others might say or think.

Lord, help me to demonstrate the true meaning of giving—
Not giving to others as a way of gaining their approval and
exceeding their expectations.

Open my eyes to my own feelings as they arise.
Help me to step aside and regain my focus as I need it.

Show me what I truly want this season—
a simple life that celebrates You—
The greatest gift of all—Jesus.

Amen.



Sympathy in One Another's Joys and Sorrows

Elizabeth's neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they rejoiced with her." [Luke 1:58](#)

We see here a striking example of the kindness we owe to one another. It is written that "they rejoiced with her." How much more happiness there would be in this evil world, if conduct like this was more common!

Sympathy in one another's joys and sorrows costs little, and yet is a grace of most mighty power.

Like the oil on the wheels of some large engine, it may seem a trifling and unimportant thing; yet in reality it has an immense influence

on the comfort and well working of the whole machine of society.

A kind word of congratulation or consolation is seldom forgotten. The heart that is warmed by good tidings, or chilled by affliction, is peculiarly susceptible, and sympathy to such a heart is often more precious than gold.

Sympathy is one of those ornaments of the Christian character which make it beautiful in the eyes of men.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. [Romans 12:15](#)

I Was Saved, But I Had Lost the Joy

A CIR Member Speaks

Before I joined Christians in Recovery is was becoming very introverted, I was saved but had lost the joy. I had allowed myself to become very self centered, due to many stressful situations in my life.

When I discovered CIR I found so many caring people filled with the love of Christ and just wanting to help anyone who asked. It made me stop and

think, that's what it's all about not just recovery but Christianity, helping and encouraging each other, I can see the light of God shining through so many people here.

We all have similar problems and some days just to read

what is happening in someone else's life makes me so grateful that this web site was available, and to know I am not alone there are people who care, who will pray for each other, chide each other sometimes and share what God is doing for them, because of this I realized God cares for me too, else why did He guide me here. My eyes have been opened to more of the word of God, praying and realizing we are not to struggle alone. Thank you for the privilege of sharing in CIR, and God Bless each person here. ~ Marcy

*Friends
are needed both
for joy and for
sorrow*

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Christmas Prayers & Blessings

Here is a series of Christmas prayers and blessings. Included are prayers for a season of grief, sorrow or loss and for those who struggle at this special time of year



Christian Christmas Prayer Before Dinner

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth... may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.-- *Karen L. Oberst*

A More Formal Prayer before Christmas Dinner

Blessed are you, O Lord who has watched over us from our youth and gave us all blessings. You provide good things to us, out of your love. You are worthy of glory, praise, blessing and thanksgiving for the food that you have prepared for us. Stretch forth your right hand and bless this food set before us for the nourishment of our bodies. Let it before power and health of our lives. We are thankful for every person that gave of themselves in preparation of this meal. Give them rest and help us to be a blessing to them. Grant salvation, grace, blessing and purity to all those who gather around this festive table. Help us to remember that you are our source of our spiritual and eternal food. We ask that you bless each person here in the New Year with a peaceful

life, joy of the soul and health of the body. We ask that you give us eyes to see you in all things so that when eating, resting or working, we do it all for the glory of Thy Holy Name. For yours is the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Christmas Supper Blessing

Thank you Lord for the fellowship around this table, for the good friends, for the hearts of love that manifested themselves through hands that prepared this wonderful feast. Bless us as we eat and bless us as we fellowship. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Children's Dinner Blessing

Happy Birthday, Jesus! We are happy because today is your special day, you were born today, just for us.. We thank you that you came from heaven to earth just for us. Thank you for all you did for us when you were here with us. You taught us how to love each other, help us to remember to be more loving. You taught us how to do the right thing, remind us that you are with us, even when we think no one is looking. We thank you that you didn't just stay a baby in a cradle but you grew up to be our savior and died on the cross for our sins. We thank you that you didn't stay dead but you came alive and went to heaven, opening a way so we can go there too, someday. Thank you

for this food and for all our family and friends. Thank you for everyone who helped make this a great day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Christmas Prayer For Those Who Struggle During Christmas

Father God, I ask you to come to those whose hearts ache on your Son's birthday. Although they sincerely thank you for your greatest gift of all -- they are hurting and lonely. Father, let them know it's OK to express to you the pain and loneliness and frustration in their hearts. Let them know you are listening -- and care.

I pray for those who are single and who have no family -- who spend much of the holidays alone. Be with them in the lonely hours, help them not to feel marginalized during this season that places so much emphasis on 'family'.

I pray for those who are housebound and infirm and are unable to leave their homes or hospital rooms due to illness. I pray for those with loved ones that are separated due to work, weather, duty or other circumstances.

I pray for families who are struggling this year, financially and emotionally. I pray for desperate spouses who worry over their marriage. I pray for those children who are

Continued on next page

frightened and alone, who are in abusive situations or who sense the worry and frustration that their parents try to hide. . I pray for parents who have children who are ill in body; ill in mind or who are addicted to drugs.

Jesus, please come as Immanuel -- God with us, Jesus, please enter into each place, each home, each hospital room, each homeless shelter, each hotel, each jail cell, each place of business - let them know they are not alone. Holy Spirit, come as the Comforter, let your gentle, healing warmth sooth and bring solace to aching hearts. God the Father, come to those without family and remind them that you are their family. Show them your heavenly, attentive, fatherly love for them in a way that they can understand. I pray this in the name of Jesus -- who knows our sorrows and understands our hearts.--[Katherine Walden](#)

Christmas Prayers in a Season of Grief, Sorrow or Loss

Father, I thank you for my family and friends. I am so grateful for each and every person around this table and I thank you for the gifts of compassion, love, strength and encouragement they have been. Although it's been a painful time recently, we know that You are always with us. Your promises are true. You will never leave us nor forsake us. Thank you for the love that holds us together and for always comforting us. Thank you for the gift of your Son, whose very life reminds us that you are a father of compassion and one acquainted with grief in the midst

of joy and joy in the midst of suffering. Help us to hold each other close and to treasure each other this day and all the days to come. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at person and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world. *Walter Russell Bowie*

More Prayers online here:
http://christians-in-recovery.org/Tools_Prayer_Christmas_Blessings



*and please
God
watch
over all our
troops*



A Holiday Sampler

*The following articles are a sample of the hundreds that are posted on the CIR website.
[Check daily](#) for the free article of the day.*

Surviving the Holidays: Some Tips for People in Recovery

For most people, the weeks between Thanksgiving and the New Year are a special time of joy and celebration. Yet, it can be an extremely difficult and stressful time for those who are just beginning to recover from addiction to alcohol and drugs. Spending the holidays in a shelter or residential recovery program is hard.

Here's a few simple thoughts that can make the experience a little more tolerable

A. Remember the spiritual significance of the holidays - This time of year is a major commercial event for America's retailers. It is also a time for special celebrations of family and goodwill. Still, we must remember that "Jesus is the Reason for the Season". Above all else, we are celebrating God's sending of His only Son to be our Savior and Redeemer. Keeping Christmas as a spiritual celebration puts all of our other expectations for the holiday season in proper perspective.

- [Read more](#)

Twelve Steps to a Better Holiday Season

1. We admitted the holiday season has a deeper meaning than drinking, drugging and overeating.
2. We came to believe that God, a power greater than ourselves, could help us see and celebrate the true meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas.
3. We came to believe that God could help us appreciate the joyfulness of the season as intended by Him.
4. We made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship with our addictions, obsessions and overindulgences during the holidays.
5. We admitted to God the exact nature of our addictive habits and overindulgences during holiday seasons past.
6. We became entirely ready to allow God, a power higher than us, to remove our attachment to alcohol, drugs and food as a necessity of the holidays.

- [Read more](#)

Holidays are so difficult; Can I just stay home?

Holidays are so difficult; my in-laws are so mean to me. Can I just stay home?

First of all, in order to stay home, would you have to make up an excuse or could you tell the truth about why you wanted to bow out of the activities? In this case, doing the right thing may be very difficult, but no less necessary.

I would guess that you could come up with several people who would be very hurt and disappointed by your absence. My advice is to focus on them. Make those few people your comfort for the day. You can sit by them, talk to them and lean on them for support. Focus on your support system instead of those few hurtful people who try to make you suffer.

Pray before you go that God will give peace to your heart and that He will calm your nerves. Ask Him to remind you of what He thinks of you. And pray for your enemies! [Matthew 5:44](#) commands believers to, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

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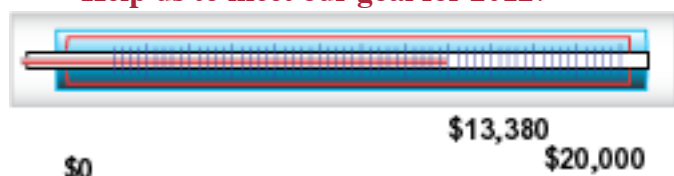
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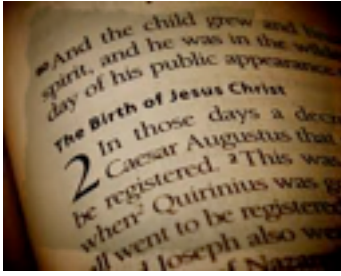
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The Christmas Story



As told by Matthew

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been

born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was



fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."



So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene." --Matthew 1:18 - 2:23 NIV



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