



HOPE Ministries Highlights

April 2014

LOST:

Over the years, we have loaned out DVD's for people to watch so they can be encouraged on the journey. We are missing several of them. If you have borrowed a DVD from HOPE Ministries, would you please return it ASAP. We are missing a number from our Jack Frost series called "Embracing the Father's Love."

Thank you!

Mission Statement:

HOPE Ministries seeks to help individuals explore patterns that may have developed over their lifetime and provide opportunities to allow Jesus to bring healing and HOPE to their lives in fresh ways.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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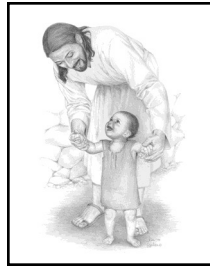
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Fear: Killer of Relationship -by Joann Nisly



"What if something happens to Nevin when he's working?" "If he were to die, then what would happen to me?" "What if I am in this 'strange' land of KS all alone?" "What would happen to the ministry...?"

The questions go on and on. Fear and anxiety...emotions that have been prevalent most of my life. Those killer words of "what if" are usually unanswerable and similar questions like this only caused me to try to make sure they didn't happen.

The questions of fear often went deeper. "What will people think?" "What if they do not approve?" "What if they won't like me, my opinions, or my ideas?" Fear permeated every way I turned. To alleviate these questions, I developed ways of control...but I didn't know it. I was only trying to make my life livable and safe. To share with people seemed unsafe, so I withdrew. I wanted to be acceptable, so I set out to prove myself. But these things were done in the subconscious; I had no idea I was doing them. I tried hard to be a good Christian. Could it be I was also afraid I would not be acceptable to God?

Recently, while reading a

book *With – Reimagining the Way You Relate To God* – by Skye Jethani, I was made aware of some of the patterns I had allowed in my Christian life. These patterns were only coping mechanisms for my fear and I thought they were acceptable. I realized that I've had a "preposition" problem in relation to God.

At times I've found myself living under God. This posture has caused me to try hard to live right by His rules so He would bless me. The harder I tried to live right and "obey the rules", the more disappointed I became when His "blessings" did not look like what I thought they should. So I tried harder. I became more disillusioned because life was so hard. I knew I was a failure in His eyes because obviously my performance was not measuring up. My Christianity was up to me and God was disappointed in me...or so I thought. Unfortunately, I'm afraid my performance was possibly a means of trying to control God to bless me in the way I wanted. The more "rules" I followed successfully made me good. If not successful, I was a failure. Life under God is actually about me. Rather than drawing me closer to God, it demands more control of myself. My fear, shame and guilt actually became greater!

I never knowingly had the desire to become God. That would be absurd! Never would I have said that I knew better than God. But, my negative thinking patterns were my "truth". Liv-

ing out of my own so-called truths caused me to also at times take the posture of life over God. Situations under control did not seem to need the involvement of God. I didn't purposely exclude Him, but neither did I always include Him. My need to PROVE myself acceptable demanded that I keep control. Living God's principles became very important. I'm afraid my focus was often on following His principles more than on God Himself --His character, His thoughts and His person. If I could apply His principles, then I was in control of myself. When in control of myself, where does that leave God? Was it possible that I was more in relationship to His principles than to Him? My success was determined by the outcome. I'm afraid I've been guilty of making God into a formula. Somehow the rest Jesus talks about in Matt. 11:28-30 seemed unattainable. I believe that in this, I actually took responsibilities upon myself that God never intended for me to carry just to prove something to myself, others, and even to God.

Then there is living life from God. In this mindset, God exists to supply what we need or desire. If these desires are not fulfilled, then God is not doing His part, or keeping His end of the bargain. I've said many "grocery list prayers." One of the desires of my heart was to have my own children. Since God did not grant this desire, I wondered about His promise of giving the desires of our hearts. Other disappointments created disillusionment in Him and His promises.

Fear: Killer of Relationship—Continued from page 1

Yes, my fear increased! The need to control increased. Depression also increased...and in that stance, I knew God had not kept His end of the bargain. This led me to think about “the grass being greener on the others side of the fence.” Once again, in this mindset, my life was actually about me and what I should have from Him.

The posture I probably have fallen into the most is living for God. This looks so “Christian.” The more I accomplish for Him, the better I am. Working hard for Him is unending and I never knew when enough was done, when God was happy with me. It was easy to neglect important relationships to get those “important, Godly” things done. My heart was neglected because of my need to work for Him. My mission became my focus. Once again the focus was really about me and my ministry.

In some ways, all these postures overlap and have similarities: They center on me, they are a way of alleviating my fear, which leads to control, and they rob me of relationship.

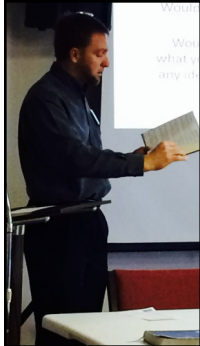
I'm excited that in the last number of years, I'm beginning to understand more the taste of living with God. Though I'm still in the journey, I am allowing myself to come to Jesus as a child, understanding that He wants me, wants to comfort me, and be involved with me. He is becoming security to me. He loves me and living successfully isn't up to me. My life is really about Him. This concept of living with God invites me into relationship and takes pressure off. I can be needy, I can learn, and Jesus is my teacher. As I respond to His invitation to “come to Him as a child,” I tend to invite Him to share my day. My trust grows and I don't need to control. As my trust is growing, I get ex-

cited about Him and desire to become like Him instead of feeling pressure to be like Him. With this relationship, the future is not as scary, and what people think doesn't hold as much power. I'm on a journey of learning to live WITH God. I'm thankful to Him for the healing He has done in my heart and that He is changing my belief system about myself, about Him and about others.



*“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
Matt. 18:3 (NIV)*

Follow Up Retreat Reflections



“I appreciated a place where it was safe for people to be open and honest about their struggles.”

This was a time of teaching, singing, self-evaluation, free-time, connecting with others, optional discussion groups, open sharing, eating together, etc.



“It was refreshing to hear the testimonies of others and the sessions were great reminders and just what I needed.”



“The testimonies were some of the most encouraging parts...”



“I enjoyed “connecting” to the people that I didn't know before this weekend.”



“Would definitely recommend the retreat.”

Personal Testimonies of the work of Jesus!

THE STORY OF TOOTSIE ROLL

Once upon a time a girl was 2 or 3 when her daddy began to call her Tootsie Roll, a pet name, a name filled with affection! Often she'd be helping him in the barn or running alongside of him asking questions inquisitively.

"You're sweet like a a tootsie roll," he would tell her. Thus began the life of Tootsie Roll, a sweet soft-hearted little girl with a sympathetic, joyful heart.

At 7 years of age, the heart of Tootsie Roll died—became buried. Due to being belittled, damaged, shattered, and buried beneath a pile of lies and untruth about herself, Tootsie Roll didn't become grown emotionally, and didn't take in any more affection. She was DEAD, had no feeling and a locked-up heart!

On April 8, 2013, at approximately 5:20 p.m., Tootsie Roll felt affection again at the body's age of 25. Her heart was still a 7 yr. old, where it had died. Tootsie Roll leapt with joy as Jesus called Tootsie Roll from the tomb of worthlessness, dumb, stupid, uncared for, unnoticed and unloved!!

A new RESURRECTED Tootsie Roll came forth from the tomb of hopelessness by the resurrectional life of Jesus—set FREE by Jesus! Jesus took the revived Tootsie Roll and placed her heart into a 25-yr. old woman, Lady of Love! In Jesus' Book of life, His records say, "Tootsie Roll's sins=PAID!"

OH, GLORY TO JESUS; My Saviour and Best Friend!



- Tootsie Roll

SHAME VS. HOPE

As a very young girl, I accepted the fact that I am a shame to a lot of people, especially to men. I was often criticized and it seemed that I was never good enough regardless how hard I tried. Many hours I sat quietly, pondering what is wrong with me. "Am I normal like others? Are people just being too kind to tell me that I'm not like my brothers and sisters, or what?" Life was very confusing.

Men were people to avoid if at all possible. If they wanted something, I quickly did what they asked and escaped to safety somewhere else. The less I had to do with men or boys, the happier I was.

Why did God create men the way He did anyway?

When I was in my thirties, I came to realize men make me very angry, even men that I had a high respect for. I couldn't carry a conversation with men without getting upset. This is not how I wanted to be, but I felt totally trapped and helpless.

Several years before I had started on a serious search for God and Jesus. Who was God and what did He want for my life? Through prayer and guidance of a loving couple, I discovered God wants to be my Heavenly Father and loves me unconditionally. God was faithful in this journey and eventually opened doors so that I was able to share my deep struggles at HOPE Ministries. Joann led me in a prayer asking Jesus the deep questions of my heart. Gently Jesus showed me that because of serious abuse from men in my life when a little girl, I started believing lies. Shame was one of the first things He showed me. Due to these abuses, I had accepted the shame as mine, but it really was not mine to carry.

The next day while praying, Jesus gave me a vivid picture of the choice that He wanted me to make. I was coming down a path that had a fork in it. One path led to my abusers and the other to Jesus. While on this path, I was totally covered with a veil, and that was the veil of shame. The abusers were laughing at me and mocking. On the other side stood Jesus, looking at me with love and compassion, holding a pure white rose. He very gently told me that He sees me as pure as this rose and He wants to give me the rose to keep. First, I needed to get rid of the veil of shame. It was hindering me and I needed to put it where it belonged. I was startled and asked, "Where does it belong or to whom?" His answer was, "It belongs to the abusers." Now the little girl was faced with a big choice. I knew what I wanted to do, but I was flooded with fears. I had no idea how to function without shame; it had been a part of me for a long time.

Satan tried hard to distract me so I could hardly think. We prayed and I realized that I truly wanted to have the rose, but was afraid of having it snatched away and given to someone else. This had happened to me as a child.

All at once Joann said, "I think we

need to go somewhere for a little bit." I replied, "OK, where do we need to go?" She said, "We need to go find a white rose that you can see with your eyes." God had a rose ready and waiting for us.

Slowly, bit by bit as the moments ticked by, I was able to simply ask Jesus to remove the veil as I don't want it. The pure joy and peace of being freed was exciting and I simply skipped to Jesus and let Him hold me while clinging to my white rose. Time and again I would look at it and simply smile with joy. By the next day, I was excited to go forth with the truth of how God sees me.

I wondered if I would really be able to relate differently to the men around me. I can't express the miracle that took place in my heart. I can relate to men and boys around me in a Godly way. The deep anger and shame is gone! I'm still tempted at times to believe the lies. Jesus is always there to help me if I let Him.

Jesus has shown me time and again that He is not ashamed of me. I have a great hope that I am becoming what I was created to be. Jesus sees a precious jewel that is shining for Him.

Today I have a hope within my heart instead of shame. It gives me the strength to continue to live for Him. Please don't believe the lie that you are hopeless because of what has happened to you in the past. I can testify that Jesus can do anything—even bring hope to the hopeless and set the captives free. (Isaiah 61:1-4)

- a Rose Receiver

"...He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed." Isaiah. 61:1b

In the last 3 months HOPE Ministries has had:

- 4 new couple cases
- 6 new single cases
- 5 follow-up couple cases
- 6 follow-up single cases

From a Board Member:



Ray & Gina Miller
Quinton and Braxton

The Power of Words

"Good job!" "I'm proud of you!" "You did great!" "We appreciate all your hard work!" These are words we all love to hear, right? There is power in these words. When we hear them from someone else, we are encouraged. They lift us up; they make us believe our efforts were worthwhile, and we are eager to take on our next task or assignment. They encourage us to work even harder and become even better at what we are doing. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. When someone insults us or a project in which we have invested our time and effort, we can quickly become discouraged and feel like giving up rather than taking on our next task. When I think

about how others' words affect me, I realize I need to examine my own words and how they are affecting others.

Do you find yourself being a natural encourager, or do you find it easier to see the negatives in someone else's efforts and character? I have to admit that offering encouragement and compliments is not something that comes easily for me. Human nature causes many of us to be more critical, or sometimes even insulting, rather than encouraging. Jesus, however, gave some harsh warnings to us about being critical of others in Matthew 5:22, when He said, "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." Why such drastic measures for an unrepentant critical spirit? I believe it is because of the damage it can do to others when we treat them in this way. When we as Christians insult or are critical of a Christian brother or sister, we cause each other undue pain and damage to our relationships. Even worse, when we treat an unbeliever in this manner, we are likely driving them further away from ever coming into a relationship with God. Our words are

powerful, and I certainly need to be reminded of this truth.

James 3:10 says, "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so." Let's strive to use our mouths to bless others. Life can be difficult sometimes; we need each other and we need encouragement from each other. We all know how encouragement from others has brightened our day from time to time – let's remember to pass that blessing on to others along the way.

Ray is employed at B&B Hydraulics and Gina works part time as a para at Partridge Grade School. They have two sons, Quinton, age 12, and Braxton, age 8. They attend Plainview Mennonite Church and are excited about the work God is doing through HOPE Ministries.

NOTICE:

Due to numerous factors, HOPE Ministries has had more expenses lately and not a subsequent increase in funding. We firmly believe this is the Lord's work and want to cooperate with Him in providing for us. If the Lord lays it on your heart to give to HOPE Ministries, we would be very grateful. Thanks for considering a gift for the work.

-Julian Nisly, Treasurer

"For we are co-workers in God's service..." 1 Cor. 3:9a (NIV)

FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Our desire is that no one will be excluded from opportunity for sessions because of finances. All counseling is done on a donation basis, and this plus the gifts of God's people, allow us to be full time in this ministry. We are grateful for all who have stood with us in so many ways and do trust in God's continuing provision. As a 501(c)(3) organization, we are accountable to our board for the finances and the operation of HOPE Ministries. If you wish to know more details about our finances, please contact Julian Nisly, our treasurer, at 620-664-5304. As God leads you to think about HOPE Ministries, please pray for us, and if He prompts you to join in our financial support, donations can be made in several ways as stated below. Tax deductible receipts will automatically be issued for checks of \$50 or more.

Donations can be done in various ways:

Send to:
HOPE Ministries
Box 103
Partridge, KS 67566

Call 620-259-9390 to use Credit Card

Go to our website and use the donation button through Paypal.



HOPE Ministries Board Members:

Nevin & Joann Nisly—director
Lynn & Sandra Miller—Board Chairman
Julian & Bertha Nisly—Sec./Treasurer
Arlen & Gloria Mast—Vice Chairman
Ray & Gina Miller—Board Member
Gene Miller—Board Member