



Beyond Abstinence!

Here's a newsflash: Abstinence and righteous behavior are not the goal of the Christian life. Abstinence is the practice of **refraining** from doing what we really want to do (or are driven to do). There is a distinct difference between "acting right", which is a battle of the will, and "being righteous", which is a result of the liberty provided by Christ. Personally, I feel sorry for the person who says, "Yes, I struggle with ____, but I have successfully resisted the urge every day for 10 years!" Because God is a good Father wanting peaceful freedom for His children, He isn't excited about abstinence (what one of my mentors calls "being miserably victorious") as a lifestyle. God provided a superior way: living out of the gift of Christ within us.

God is good and Jesus has paid in full for the resolution of every human need. (Is. 53:5) "He has given us everything we need for life and godliness..." (II Pet 2:10).

The way for our daily victory is provided for, and because we are now in Christ, our new DNA is Christ's nature. [DNA contains the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all living organisms. It is often compared to a set of blueprints like a recipe or a code.] Our Father wants us to enjoy freedom, not an exhausting, continual struggle to act correctly, i.e., acting righteously by self-effort, or being self-righteous. We frequently hear ministry recipients say with wide-eyed bewilderment, "**Why hasn't anyone told me this before?**" Most have understood, "I just need to be more disciplined and/or try harder."

Example: You may know this Christian leader – he's the director of an influential ministry and has "performance-based spirituality" down to a fine art, but suddenly has a massive 'moral failure'. Everyone is shocked. How could such a "Godly" and "upstanding" leader do such a thing? Or you may know a couple who had what looked like a great marriage for 46 yrs. and suddenly she ran off with another man. What is up with that?

God's loving preventative solution? Transformation through mind renewal (Rom 12:2). Emotional pain is always underlying the dishonoring choices we make. (No, it isn't the 'Old Man' of Rom 6; he is dead!) It *is* old thinking/beliefs. The pain comes from lies in our belief system usually stemming from childhood experiences that were misinterpreted. **Our advice when struggling:**

1. Reject guilt and shame for yourself; and remember there's no sense in judging anyone else - we are all on the renewal journey. (continued on pg. 2)

News and Praises

► More freedom and victory coming from the Father's heart to many of our guests.



Love Story

► The Boat Retreat vision won't die! Neil has been systematically surveying the islands and bays around Anacortes in our little speed boat and taking people out for short day trips as a prophetic act - a seed of what will be!

► God has provided stellar admin help! Sarah Day comes one day/wk & is a huge encouragement.

► In July we were blessed with 32 guests (13 overnight), served 43 guest meals, and had 22 prayer counseling sessions, including 3 new ministry recipients.

► Neil's 'Campfire Boys' group boated to Huckleberry Is. for fellowship and prayer BBQ

► It's been interesting for Neil to work a couple days with Marine Spill Response Corp in Bellingham and Anacortes and hear the inside scoop on the Gulf oil spill clean up. He is part of a labor pool that does drills with MSRC in prep for oil spills locally.

Thank you:

Andrea for your awesome help on our newsletters!

Betty M for the special gift that enabled us to purchase an extra fridge!

Gary & Cathy for your peaceful home for N & K to take a much appreciated break.

Lucas for driving to Port Hardy and back to pick up Julie from her SALTS trip.

Many of you for checks and encouraging notes!

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2. For the sake of your family and society, practice abstinence, because it is better than sinning.
3. Don't mistake abstinence for spiritual maturity; it is not the victorious freedom Christ purchased for us.
4. Continue to pursue mind-renewing encounters with your Redeemer. It could involve simply meeting with the Holy Spirit to say, "I am not experiencing *the peace that passes understanding* right now and feel like behaving in a way I know I'll regret. Please reveal the lie behind my emotional pain and renew my belief system in order to set me free." The more we ambassadors believe *like* Jesus, the more the hurting world will see God's nature displayed. It is 'Christ in us, the hope of [His] glory, filling the earth...Col 1:27; Jn 17:22



Late one night in the mid-80's, I tied the mission boat up at Gold River, B.C., beside the *Black Prince*. She was a low budget workboat with a serious leak in the

hull. I knew this because throughout the night, every 20 minutes, her bilge pump would wake me up as it noisily gurgled water over the side into the harbor three feet away. The *Black Prince's* owner was doing what we call "floating on your bilge pump". For months he would continue to employ the vessel and postpone a shipyard bill by simply removing water only slightly faster than it leaked in. By avoiding proper repair, he relied on an emergency system consisting of a small 12-volt pump designed for rare and short term use. If the bilge pump failed, the boat would sink in short order. Sinking boats are a mess, expensive to recover, and often declared "a total loss". The *Black Prince* needed a haul out and probably some major surgery on its hull. Likewise, we Christians, in an effort to avoid emotional surgery, try to keep up appearances and hang on by sheer willpower. If the willpower fails, down goes the ship. God never intended us to operate this way! 'Sheer willpower' is only a temporary system designed for rare and short term use and wasn't intended as a long-term system for keeping our 'boat' afloat.

Besides hosting 32 guests this month, we've been doing a little...



farming...



logging...



...skiing

It has been a wonderful privilege to have all three (adult) kids home for most of the summer. They have each been a huge help with the physical jobs around here but more importantly have been a blessing to the ministry by contributing their unique gifts and personalities.

Blessings to you from Capt. Neil and Crew~

We would be encouraged to hear from you:
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Tax-deductible donations may be made to:
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www.noblemaritime.com

