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Taking Flight

By Ronnie Crocker

When an aircraft races down the runway, the Law of Gravity aggressively works to keep the plane down. When it takes flight, gravity persistently strives to pull the plane back down. But when another law is applied, which is superior to the Law of Gravity, the plane lifts thousands of feet and flies hundreds of miles an hour. This greater principle is the Law of Aerodynamics!

Living among and ministering to recovering drug addicts, has helped us to appreciate two powerful laws mentioned in Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Our program members tell us how the drugs pulled them down "into captivity to the law of sin" (Romans 7:23). It has been hard to observe years of spiritual, physical, social, financial, and emotional destruction caused by "the law of sin." This is why "the law of sin" is as certain to us as the law of gravity!

We have enjoyed a wonderful experience observing recovering addicts take their first steps "according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Seeing "the law of the Spirit" set them "free from the law of sin and death" is an amazing sight! This is why God's "law of the Spirit" is as certain to us as the Law of Aerodynamics.

The "law of the Spirit" is the primary principle of our program of recovery! Daily Bible classes, 1-on-1 spiritual counseling sessions and attendance of all church services are required. Program members receive and apply "the law of the Spirit" by prayerfully reading, studying and doing God's Word. We cannot force a man to receive and apply the "law of the Spirit." Rejecting this law always results in relapse and continued destruction. On the other hand, we have never observed someone relapse who has embraced the "law of the Spirit." Like the aircraft, he is set free of the forces that have held him down. How grateful we all are for this freedom found in Christ Jesus!



Words of Wisdom from Lonnie Jones



What if we understood “addiction” as compulsive comfort seeking? What if addictions were rooted not in the chemical itself or the cluster of behaviors we often see manifested but rather in traumatic events. Based on the theories of Lance Dodes, the mind-body research of Bessel Van Der Kolk and the work of Kaiser Permanente on Adverse Childhood Experiences we are discovering that Developmental Trauma Disorder should be included in our diagnostic manuals. Unfortunately it is not. So we are stuck treating diagnosis of outward behavior: Attention Deficit, Oppositional Defiance, Intermittent Explosive, Emotional Dysregulation and Substance Abuse Disorders. All these diagnoses are concentrated on outward symptomology and do not address the root causes. Simply put what we now understand as addictive behavior is an adaptive behavior that has developed covertly to deal with underlying feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, pervasive powerlessness or being trapped. The individual experiencing these sensations are often unaware that these feelings are connected to previous significant events (traumas) from earlier circumstances. Through the course of this process the addictive behavior serves as replacement behavior to address these feelings, sensations, thoughts and beliefs. If we can find the root cause of the original use or when/how the substance abuse was non-consciously bonded to the original trauma we can break this connection and create new neural pathways and substitute the behavior with alternatives that are not illegal, immoral or damaging to the soul. This approach is not about talking about not drinking, not using pills or not engaging in compulsive acts. It is not about discussing the harmful consequences of these behaviors but rather understanding how these addictive behaviors have coconsciously been connected to these feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and powerlessness.

In the last six months I have been fortunate to explore this approach with the men who live at Project Rescue. We are employing a five to six session program where we discover together what attachments, connections, feelings and traumas can be associated with the individual manifestation of addictive behavior. In many cases we find that the connection is such a part of ingrained behavior that it is not recognized as problematic or even connected. In the cases where we have made these connections the new thought pattern concerning substance use is almost spontaneous. In other cases we are using a trauma clearing protocol based on the work of Courtney Armstrong’s Trauma Informed Hypnotherapy and John Connelly’s Rapid Resolution Therapy. It is too early to state a statistical significance to this approach but the men are self-reporting a new insight and the ability to see the possibility of lifelong sobriety rather the old understanding of life long addiction “one day at a time”.

The gentlemen at PR are often here through self-initiated behavior and many have been through several rehabilitation programs. Their honesty, sincerity and desire to become the men that God called them to be is inspiring. Their bond to each other and inclusion of me as part of the “family” is a genuinely heart-warming experience.



From the Heart of John Priola



In October 2018, Ronnie Crocker approached me about teaching some Bible classes to the men at Project Rescue. My friend, Roger Jackson, had been doing it for years, but was now no longer able to do so. I began that month teaching members one on one for 4-5 hours per day, Monday-Friday, and have continued to do so since that time. Each class lasts 45 minutes to an hour. Each student is different; their knowledge of the Bible differs from others. The one on one method has proved to be the best for teaching each student on his level and at his speed.

My objective is to help each member learn *how* to study the Bible. Proper Bible study involves the right attitude toward the Bible, the right reason for studying, the right way to study and the right effort that one needs to put into the study. Briefly, we discuss the right *attitude* is that we are dealing with a unique book – it is a “God breathed” book that is all sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16, 17); the right *reason* as presenting ourselves “approved unto God”; the right *way* as “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) and not twisting or perverting the scriptures to our own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16); the right *effort* is receiving “the word with all readiness” and searching or examining “the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so” (Acts 17:11).

We begin our study with an overview of the Bible. This deals with an understanding of the *purpose* of the Bible, the *theme* of the Bible, Bible *dispensations or ages*, and the *periods* of Bible History. We take Bible events and people and learn to associate them with the correct place in the periods of Bible history.

We also introduce them to the tools necessary for studying the Bible. We introduce them to 5 tools and show them how to use them, and then give them assignments that have them make use of the tools. The 5 tools we emphasize are the Bible, a Bible dictionary, an English dictionary, a concordance, and Vine’s Dictionary of NT words. This provides the opportunity to discuss proper ways of reasoning (induction and deduction) and proper rules for interpreting Scripture.

We study various Bible stories and learn the important lessons from each. This prompts discussion about a number of things like: the importance of choices and the consequences associated with choices, authority, character traits like courage, determination, perseverance and dedication. It gives the opportunity to deal with sin, temptation, the faithfulness of God, reward and punishment.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to teach some of the Bible classes. It is a wonderful opportunity to sow the seed. The members also have a 30 minute class each morning taught by Ronnie. It is an excellent class – one I attend and learn valuable lessons. They also have classes each evening taught by various people. Every class is intended to be an effort to increase their knowledge and appreciation of God’s Word. I constantly encourage them to remember a saying I first heard from brother V. P. Black – “Unless there is *in* us that which is *above* us we will soon *yield* to that which is around us”. We must get God’s Word living in us!!!

What has my experience been like in these 3+ months? I have found some that are just like sponges. They soak up what is taught, spend time daily studying on their own, and are really putting forth an enthusiastic effort to grow. Others are not quite as enthusiastic, but still are putting forth a good effort. And there are a few, who haven’t bought into the value of God’s Word just yet. But, hopefully, in time they will

Pray for these efforts – that God’s Word will find a place to dwell richly in each member’s heart!!!!