

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

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Celebrate with us as we start our 4th year publishing **The Growth Journal**. Because of you and your interest in this publication it has grown from its original 50 copies at Lansing Correctional Facility to 450 copies distributed across Kansas and Missouri.

Special shout out to Garnett T. in Lansing for planting the seed that started this periodical.

“Words to Grow By”

LINDA LEWIS, GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Do you know the 10 Commandments?

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

Wait, Fight and Endure

The longer you wait for something,
The more you will appreciate it when it arrives.

The harder you have to fight for something,
The more priceless it will become once you have achieved it.

And the more pain you will have to endure on the journey,

The sweeter the arrival at your destination.

All good things are worth waiting for and worth fighting for.

Lamentations 3:25 – The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the souls who seeks Him.



David – Part 3 BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ, CHURCH OF THE HARVEST

We have spent two months discussing David's early life and journey to being king. This month we will examine one of the greatest moments of sin in the Bible and see how we can learn from it.

One pattern of David's life that we have not discussed was his love of women. He married Michal, Saul's daughter, while he still lived at the palace. When he fled the palace because King Saul was trying to kill him, he left Michal behind. In his time in hiding, he marries two different women, Abigail (after Nabal died) and Ahinoam of Jezreel (1 Samuel 25:43).

Even though polygamy was common in those times, it wasn't God's best plan. God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman for life. I wonder what would have happened if David would have taken Michal with him when he fled from King Saul. Would he have still married multiple women? Would his sexual desires have been satisfied with the wife of his youth? We will never know the answers to these questions.

Even though David had two wives, when he returned to be king, he demanded Michal (his original wife who King Saul gave to another) be returned to him so he could have a third wife (2 Samuel 3:13).

"And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David." - 2 Samuel 5:13

The Bible doesn't say how many more wives David took, but it is clear that he loved women. He was a valiant soldier who couldn't be killed in battle, but if he had a weakness, it was his desire for women. I believe the enemy of our souls knew this and used women to set David up. We need to recognize that the enemy watches us and knows where temptation will work with us. And we all will be tempted, even Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Being tempted isn't sin, giving into temptation is where sin occurs.

"And it happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold." - 2 Samuel 11:1-2

David – Part 3 BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ

I have no doubt that David was set up. First, he was supposed to be on the battle field - it was the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle. For some reason, David stayed at home. He sent someone else to do his job. We don't know why David didn't go out to battle, perhaps he had important palace business, perhaps he needed rest, or maybe he was bored with the soldier life or maybe he was heavy with the responsibilities of being king. We don't know why he stayed behind while his army went to battle, we just know that he was not doing what he was supposed to be doing.

I know in my life, when God gives me an assignment and I don't do it, I lose my focus on God. I tend to start rationalizing why I am not obedient; I tend to justify my behavior. I start making excuses to why my heart is starting to drift from God. I might even start blaming other people and will withdraw from friendships and Godly relationships. I will stop going to church or stop reading the Bible. Ultimately, I start to drift from God and when I drift, then I am a prime target to the schemes and temptations of the enemy. I believe this is what happened to David.

So David is walking on the roof of the palace and sees a beautiful woman bathing.

“So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is she not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’” - 2 Samuel 11:3

I love this response! The servant was asking the king a question, as if the servant was telling the king that the king knew the answer to the question. The servant was like, “you know who this is, this is Uriah the Hittite's wife.”

Uriah the Hittite was one of David's “Mighty Men” (2 Samuel 23:39). David had key men in his life who were part of his army. He had 30 Mighty Men and Uriah was part of that group. These men had been with David in the wilderness before he was king and served him faithfully. I have no doubt that David knew Uriah personally and thus, had actually met his wife, Bathsheba before that night on the palace roof.

“Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, ‘I am with child’.” - 2 Samuel 11:4-5

David – Part 3 BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ

I have no doubt that this wasn't the first time the king saw a beautiful woman and based on his position as king, took her and had sex with her. He was the king and was used to getting what he wanted. However, now the king had a problem. He had impregnated another man's wife while the man was away at the battlefield.

Instead of repenting of his sin, King David did what many of us would do in a situation like this, he tried to create a cover up. King David sent for Uriah and after a war briefing, encouraged Uriah to go to his house and wash his feet. King David even sent a gift of food to his house. However, Uriah would not go to his house, but instead, slept at the door of the king's house. When King David asked him why he didn't go home, Uriah said that while the armies of Israel are in battle, he shouldn't have the pleasure of eating in his house or lying with his wife. King David then got Uriah drunk but instead of going home, Uriah slept again at the door of the king's house.

So David had a big problem, Uriah wasn't going to go home and have sex with his wife. His plan for a cover up didn't work. Sometimes we need to understand that when our cover up doesn't work, it could be the mercies of God trying to get us to repent. David had another opportunity to repent. Uriah was right in front of him. He could confess and repent and rely on the mercies of God. Instead, David went to a darker place than ever imaginable. David wrote orders to Joab (the general of the Israelite army) to put Uriah in the place of the fiercest battle and then withdraw from him that he may be killed. David handed those orders to Uriah and had him carry his own death warrant to the battle field.

Joab followed those orders and Uriah the Hittite was killed (2 Samuel 11:6-26).

"And when her (Bathsheba) mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." 2 Samuel 11:27

If David, a "man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22) ended up in such a dark place that he committed adultery and murder, what is stopping us from ending up in such dark places? First, we need to know where our weaknesses lie. David's weakness was his love of women and that love ultimately led him to a very dark place. Second, we need to be busy doing what we are called to do. David was king and should have been busy doing what kings do. In this case, it was going to war. Instead, he let himself drift away from his purpose. Finally, when confronted with our sin, we need to confess and repent, not cover up.

Next month we will look at how David was confronted with his sin and his response.

His Pants Dropped Where? BY BEVERLY BROWN, GMI VOLUNTEER/WRITER



Usually in my articles I try to encourage, inspire, uplift or teach. This month I thought I would tell a funny story. We all can use a chuckle now and then.

I have a friend whom I shall affectionately call George. George is a large man – rotund around the middle. However, he has a relatively slender bottom and legs.

A few years ago, he was roughing in a room in the basement since a child was moving back home. When it was time to buy the door, he made a trip to Home Depot, dressed in a t-shirt and pair of shorts.

George wanted to be the door to be the largest size available so it would be easier to move furniture in the room, once completed.

After finding the door he wanted, he loaded it on one of the large flat-bed carts. It was, of course, too large to put in a regular cart. He purchased the door and headed to his car.

George pushed the large cart to his truck but every time he let go of the cart to lift the door into the truck, the cart started rolling down the parking lot. A nice lady saw his dilemma and politely asked, “Would you like me to hold the cart for you so it won’t roll away?”

“Yes, that would be great,” was his ready answer.

As he lifted the door up above his head to put it in the truck, he unwittingly took a breath making his stomach draw in. When he did, his shorts dropped to his ankles. Embarrassed and humiliated, he glanced around at the woman helping him. She had her head turned the other way.

He had no choice but to go ahead and put the door in the truck, leaving his shorts around his ankles for the short time it took to load the door.

As soon as the door was put in the truck bed, George quickly bent over, grabbed his shorts, and yanked them up as fast as he could. He peeked to see what the woman was doing. She was long gone. No trace of her anywhere.

George brought the door home and successfully put it in.

When he told me of the incident, I thought I was going to split a side laughing. I loved his transparency in telling me. He certainly did not have to.

The next day, George needed to make another trip to Home Depot. His wife noticed he was wearing long pants and a button-down shirt. She knew his usual attire was the t-shirt and shorts he had worn the day before.

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“I have to go Home Depot, and I don’t want anyone to recognize me.”

From that time on for several years, friends and family would laughingly point out the Home Depot where he went as the one where “George made his debut.”

I hope you got a chuckle from my story. I know I laughed several times while writing it.

The Bible says a merry heart does good like a medicine. Hopefully, this story gave you your dose of laughter today.

One final thought: if, perchance, you happen to know George, please do not mention his actual name. He would be thoroughly humiliated.

Your Value to Jesus! By Nathaniel Satterlee, Church of the Harvest



For much of my Christian life, I had not fully understood why Jesus died for me. I believed that I was bad, and because of His goodness, he came to earth to suffer a painful death on the cross to cover my sins. Of course there is truth to this belief, but it just doesn't make sense, nor does it fully grasp His heart. Let's take a look at a scripture that

helped me start to unlock His true motivation behind the sacrifice.

Matthew 13:47-48 - "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

This scripture is a parable that Jesus told to the twelve disciples. A parable is a short story with symbolic elements that are meant to teach a lesson. This story contains four key elements: a merchant (buyer, trader), a seller, a valuable pearl, and a payment. Jesus told this story to his disciples to help them to understand his purpose for being on the earth. He is the merchant who came from Heaven, down to Earth, to purchase our lives at the cost of His own.

Most of my Christian life, this was my only understanding of this story. I believed that Jesus was using this story to speak only of His goodness and selflessness, to pay the ultimate price for my sins; but I never examined what He was also saying about me (and you as well) in this story. "Why would Jesus give everything He had for me, a lowly sinner?" This question has crossed the mind of many people, Christians and non-Christians, but the question does not match what Jesus said. He said the merchant bought a pearl of "great value." So clearly, he does not see us as lowly sinners.

Would Jesus have given everything He had for you if He didn't believe that you are worth it? Typically, if someone is willing to give everything for what they want in return, he/she probably believes it is worth more than what he can pay. But Jesus' payment was accepted, His blood spilled, His life taken, so that we can be His. So, since the seller of the pearl accepted the payment, what can be said about him? He did not understand the pearl's value.

It can be so easy for anyone, even Christians, to give themselves to something/someone that does not understand their value. In life you will encounter many people, organizations, systems, etc.... that will only value you based on what you can give to them, or what you have earned. Those in the workforce are paid based only on the value of their work. And the instant a mistake is made, the company may not be willing to pay them anymore. It can be even more challenging for you who are in the prison system. For most of your term, you may be treated as a burden to society, and when released, you might be unable to find work because you are only seen as a law-breaker. Most people will see you for less than you are, and many people come into agreement with that lie. They live their lives seeing themselves only as the world sees them, and as a result, they do not live the fullness of life that God has for them.

God is never looking to put you down for your shortcomings or mistakes. He desires to lift you up to become the man or woman He created you to be. He never does anything by accident, and that includes putting you on this earth. He has put something in you that nobody else in this world can offer. That is what makes you the pearl of great value. Things that are common are not valued. It is things that are rare and unique that hold great value. If you see yourself as common, you have just not yet seen what God has always seen in you. Don't give up! Ask Him! Seek Him! He will reveal it to you.

In your life, the voice of Jesus must speak louder than the voices of the world around you. Never forget the payment he made for you. Even in your worst moments, he still sees you only for the value he placed on your life when He was on the cross. He died for all mankind, but His sacrifice was not made simply to get a lot of followers. He is not after quantity, but quality. This is personal. He is after a personal relationship with you. Let me say it this way: The blood of Jesus is enough for the redemption of all of mankind. And, even if Jesus knew that you were the only person who would ever accept His gift, He would still have given His life for you.

From the Yard: Words of inspiration from your brothers and sisters who have been incarcerated. This month we are blessed with two pieces from Topeka Correctional Facility.

“Now that You Know” by Yvonne P., Topeka Correctional Facility

Have you ever done something and later said, “Man, if I had known”. Well now you know! You have a high priest that came down in the flesh, died for your sins, passed back into the heavens and is making intercession for you right now.

Romans 8:1 lets us know there is no condemnation to them that leave behind their flesh and walk after the spirit. Romans 8:34 asks “who condemns?” Christ died and rose, sat at God’s right hand, and yet and still, intercedes for you. So you need to look to Christ, the author and finisher of your faith, as stated in Colossians 3:1-2, seeking those things that are above. We have to allow the Spirit to recondition us because our flesh is set on earth and God’s Word tells us to set our affections on things above.

I am learning always to want the greater things in God. I want the greater Word so I can preach the scriptures; II Timothy 2:15, for the greater purpose in His heavenly calling. I am a servant so I want greater skill at serving God. Especially now that I know I can come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy, as well as find grace and help in times of need.

I realize I’m in need every day, so now that I know, I come boldly, “God it’s me, Winette, Vonne, I need your mercy, your goodness, your grace”.

The old people use to sing a song stating, “It’s me oh Lord standing in the need of prayer”. Those older people knew, so they let go of pride and they studied, praised, and acted as though they wanted it, and as if it was already theirs and said “Jesus, it’s me oh Lord and now I know I can come to you, I need you.”

I’m a pretty old person by nature, but it’s something about when you have already obtained so much that you can get a little reluctant. So that is when I remember Whose I am and who I am. Hallelujah!

I encourage you **now that you know** to come boldly before the throne of grace knowing you have your own high priest. Just like people have their own lawyers and bankers, you have your own high priest interceding for you.

Hebrews 11:14-16

For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. ¹⁵ And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Words of Encouragement by Tredessa D., Topeka Correctional Facility

Loosed into a world of carnage; fear could not have any place.

War is the subtle strategy, of where the battles show their face.

Flashes of blood, the spirit with the flesh.

Where is my conscience, it all can’t mesh.

Or Shall I say somehow it does, what a terrifying race.

Who is winning, cause victory has a bittersweet taste.

The double minded man has no place in this world, but don’t we all when our faith is lacking and low?

Who are you calling on when the teeth of life show?

Suit up; not with Polo, a fitted suit, stilettos, or a nice pair of Jays.

Better get ready cause even Satan knows we’re living in the last days.

Who shall you serve? That is the real question at hand.

Prayed up cause divided we fall, united with Jesus we stand!



Women Empowering Women

Phenomenal Woman

BY MAYA ANGELOU



Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
 I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion
 model's size
 But when I start to tell them,
 They think I'm telling lies.
 I say,
 It's in the reach of my arms,
 The span of my hips,
 The stride of my step,
 The curl of my lips.
 I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.
 Phenomenal woman,
 That's me.

I walk into a room
 Just as cool as you please,
 And to a man,
 The fellows stand or
 Fall down on their knees.
 Then they swarm around me,
 A hive of honey bees.
 I say,
 It's the fire in my eyes,
 And the flash of my teeth,
 The swing in my waist,
 And the joy in my feet.
 I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,
 That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
 What they see in me.
 They try so much
 But they can't touch
 My inner mystery.
 When I try to show them,
 They say they still can't see.
 I say,
 It's in the arch of my back,
 The sun of my smile,
 The ride of my breasts,
 The grace of my style.
 I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.
 Phenomenal woman,
 That's me.

Now you understand
 Just why my head's not bowed.
 I don't shout or jump about
 Or have to talk real loud.
 When you see me passing,
 It ought to make you proud.
 I say,
 It's in the click of my heels,
 The bend of my hair,
 the palm of my hand,
 The need for my care.
 'Cause I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.
 Phenomenal woman,
 That's me!

You are somebody and God loves you! *Romans 8:37-39*

Word Search

BibleWise

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The following books can be found on the word search grid below. Circle the letters that make the word. The letters must be in straight lines, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Words may be spelled either forward or backward.

GENESIS	KINGS	SONG OF SOLOMON	OBADIAH
EXODUS	CHRONICLES	ISAIAH	JONAH
LEVITICUS	EZRA	JEREMIAH	MICAH
NUMBERS	NEHEMIAH	LAMENTATIONS	NAHUM
DEUTERONOMY	ESTHER	EZEKIEL	HABAKKUK
JOSHUA	JOB	DANIEL	ZEPHANIAH
JUDGES	PSALMS	HOSEA	HAGGAI
RUTH	PROVERBS	JOEL	ZECHARIAH
SAMUEL	ECCLESIASTES	AMOS	MALACHI

M C R O M A D A H A I M E H E N D
A L E V I S K U K K A B A H A S E
L E X O A N I E Z E K I E L L O U
A V C H R O N I C L E S A E H N T
C I H O Z I G C R O M E O U A G E
H T A P E T S E G D U J O M C O R
I I R A A H O S A M O S A I F O
H C M O E T A G E N E S I S M S N
A U E V S N I O X E X H T U R O O
I S R E O E A B O J M U H A N L M
R Z E R H M S P D A N A L R Z O Y
A A J B E A I N U M B E R S N M E
H C P S A L M S S L E I N A D O S
C H G S E T S A I S E L C C E N I
E A O B A D I A H A N O J A S P S
Z M I A G G A H A I N A H P E Z M

What must I do to be saved?

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness and wish to be connected to Him, then take a moment and say this prayer:

“Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen.”



Romans 10:9 says that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063



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THE GROWTH JOURNAL

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RESET YOUR LIFE

Lonnie Johnson

According to the word of God we were all born into sin and shaped in iniquity. We came to this life with the propensity to sin without anyone teaching us how. This was the handy work of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Our flesh desires to sin and enjoy the pleasures of life. The flesh knows it isn't going to heaven nor hell. So you cannot bribe it nor scare it. Unchecked the flesh will always desire those things that **feel** good. And it will always want more of that thing than it enjoyed last time.

great plague spread upon wildfire, God His backup "Ace in the Christ. Jesus make a way in right with God the

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)
Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Because this called sin mankind like unleashed plan, His Hole", Jesus came to for us to live relationship way he

originally planned. The Good thing is that **ANYONE**, no matter how old, no matter how poor, no matter what crimes you have committed, you can reset your life and start all over again. The Word of God promises us that if we are "**in Christ**" we become "**New Creatures**". That means anything we've done in the past is no longer held against us in the eyes of the Lord. We get a fresh start in life. This doesn't mean we will not have to deal with the consequences of our actions, but God will be with us to help us make it through those consequences. Once we step into this "new life", we are guaranteed a life full riches and blessings that are mentioned throughout God's Word.

"FROM THE YARD"

Each newsletter we will bring you content from one of your very own brothers on the inside. This issue we hear from G. Tolen.

This is to my Brothers:

Our goal should be to become Godly men. We should be seeking in our lives victory over sin that Jesus made for us on the cross. Some of us are learning the daily experience of dying to self and depending on the Holy Spirit to give us victory in our lives. There are a number of us who are experiencing a new freedom as we've changed some of our overall expressions. I praise God for the changes He is making in my life.

"Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. But I will not be mastered by anything."

Your Brother in Christ
Tolen G.

“WORDS TO GROW BY”

Linda Lewis

You are **STRONGER** than you seem, **BRAVER** than you believe, and **SMARTER** than you think you are.

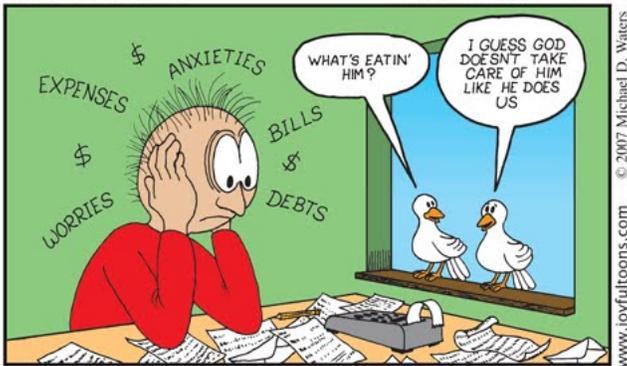
Anyone can give up; it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together, when everyone else would understand

if you fell apart, that's **true strength**.

The Lighter Side of Growth Ministries

DON'T WORRY

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?
 - MATTHEW 6:26-27 NIV

Growth Ministries Activities

In October a softball game was played between the men of Growth Ministries and the AAO group at Lansing Correctional Facility. It is with great sadness we must confess that Growth Ministries lost both games. Regardless of the loss we had a wonderful time. We appreciate the lunch that AAO provided.

We are working on a possible basketball game during the winter months to seek revenge.

We are also working to bring back Bishop Eric Morrison and his choir for a Gospel Expo.

Stay tuned for more.

Closing words from Brother Tolen

If you have something that you want to talk about, and you want someone to listen, pick up your pen and paper and write "Growth Ministries". Someone will always be there to listen. Share you experience with the outside and let them know what's going on in your life. Shout to the Heavens, and let all know how God has been working in your life. Share your stories. If you need prayer, just ask them to pray for you, and whatever needs you may have.

Growth Ministries Inc. is a Christian based not for profit organization with a passion and desire to assist individuals improve spiritually and socially through a variety of services, activities and events.