



MINISTRY NEWS

Encouraging, instructing and informing those serving in nursing home ministry

March/April 2019

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
~ 1 John 3:1



A DEEPER LOOK...

I have an important question: Why did God create us?

I'm not asking what man's purpose is in this world, but what is God's personal purpose for creating people? This question

has caused me to dig a little deeper, in fact, a lot deeper... Where in the Bible does God specifically state His reason for creating mankind?

As much as I have generally assumed the answer for decades, finding it in Scripture was not easy. But when I did, my perspective on the magnitude of God's amazing love was significantly heightened.

God created us because He wants to share a loving, nurturing relationship with us, and to forever share the beauty of life with Him as our Heavenly Father.

To summarize what I found from reading the first chapter of Ephesians several times, and from several translations:

God, who is Love, took great pleasure in His predetermined plan to adopt us through His Son, Jesus, enabling us to share in every Heavenly blessing.

This has been our Father's plan, even before the creation of the world, and He, in great wisdom and understanding, accomplished this at the perfect time, through the cross of our Lord, Jesus.

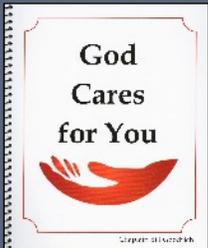
Nothing can or ever will hinder God from this loving purpose He has for us!

Since creation, every command, directive, prophecy, and story given in Scripture, every intervention God has made on our behalf, the sending of His Son Jesus to pay for our sins on the cross, all of it has been for His ultimate goal for us to share in eternal fellowship with Him. Since the fall of man, our loving God has been planning, calling, drawing, and leading us into this communion through His Word and His Spirit.

What also amazes me, is that no matter how we have lived our lives, what we have done or not done, or the good or bad we have experienced, God's intention remains for us to share in an eternal fellowship of love in Him.

I have a friend who just recently died. When I met him over a year ago, he was very defiant and antagonistic about God and particularly Jesus. Yet, because he wanted to know the truth about God, he asked me many questions. Several months later, he confessed his need for forgiveness and opened his heart to invite Jesus in. By the time he reached his last weeks, he was sincerely praying for God to fulfill His purpose in him. Our Father in Heaven lavished His grace upon this 84 year-old child of His, and God's ultimate purpose is now fulfilled in my friend.

God's love is greater than our sin. He lavishes His love on us, that we might find fulfillment in His unimaginable purpose. What Good News! And what a great privilege we have to share this Gospel with those who are spending their last days in a care home, knowing that God's Spirit speaks to those who listen, softening their hearts to take Jesus' hand. ~ BG



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ANSWERED PRAYERS

My wife and I had prayed for several years for God to find us a ministry where we could both be involved together. About two years ago, we decided to downsize and God led us to the small town of Garrett, Indiana and to the Church at Garrett. We found it to truly be a spirit-filled church with a heart to reach the community. As we settled in, we joined the nursing home ministry headed by Sharmon, and began to help with visits, activities, and Bible studies for the residents. With encouragement from our Pastor, Tom, and a feeling that God was calling me to take a more active role, I began to lead the Bible studies. I have found this to be very rewarding and such a blessing. We are part of a wonderful team and are so thankful to have the opportunity to enjoy lasting friendships with the residents. God is so faithful and has answered our prayers.

After one of our Bible studies, a 96-year-old resident confided to us that she had always had it on her heart to be baptized, but had never done so because she was afraid of being immersed in water as a result of an incident in her childhood. After conveying this to us, Pastor Tom and others placed towels around her,

and with a cup of water baptized her right then and there. How rewarding it is to be a part of someone's journey and to help in lifting that burden from her heart.

It is amazing what God can do if we heed his call to be his hands extended here on earth. ~ Chris and Andrea from Church at Garrett



IT REALLY MATTERS!

May God bless all of you who give of your time and resources to assure our lonely neighbors have a friend to help them take Jesus' hand.

So many nursing home residents are open to the Gospel of Jesus. We rejoice that the volunteer missionaries whom we serve will be visiting over 8,000 residents this month. Yet there are almost two million more on the brink of eternity. Your prayers, ministry time, and funding really matter! May Jesus' joy be yours as you give what you can to help them find hope and peace in Him. ~ BG

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." ~ John 15:9-12

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

I felt very led to say the sinner's prayer this morning at the nursing home. I shared with the residents that last Wednesday was my 35th spiritual birthday. It worked out so well as an opportunity for me to share what it meant to receive Christ & be born again. I had one man, Randy, strongly on my heart since he has cancer. He is the man that "accidentally" found himself up in front at one of our services about a year ago, because he thought it was bingo. I teased him that it was "church", but he was blocked by many other wheelchairs & we encouraged him to stay. He has come faithfully ever since!

As he and I were chatting before our team left the home, he said to me that he had been a drunk and he seemed to want to "clear



things up." I was able to reassure him that all have sinned, but if he repented this morning, he would be cleansed and made a new creation and adopted into God's forever family! I asked if today was perhaps his spiritual birthday, and he said, YES!!What a wonderful ministry the Lord has called me into. It is such a blessing to be a nursing home missionary! ~ Betty S., Grace Church

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY!

An Activity Director called me and asked if I would visit a lady who was concerned about needing to be baptized. The lady, in her 80's and rather weak, was discharged from the hospital to the care home. She told me that she wanted to be baptized. I asked her if she knew what baptism meant. She really did not, which led me to explain it and her praying to receive Jesus as her Savior!

She is at peace, her daughter grateful, and me quite thrilled. To God be the glory! ~ Chaplain Michael

TEAM WORK

Last month I had to go out of town, and since it was a last-minute arrangement, I called two of my team members, asking if they would step in to share the Bible lesson for me. Since there was little time for them to prepare, I suggest that they take song requests from the residents and intersperse the songs with related Scriptures and prayers. They agreed, we prayed...

The next day I received a note from one of the team members. She shared, *"What a wonderful time of praise and worship we had last night! We worked well together and the Holy Spirit was evident throughout the Bible study. The music the residents chose was a little different than the usual songs and lent themselves perfectly to the message The Lord had placed on our hearts to share. The*

residents were alert and one newer lady in her 90's, in pain and a little confused, was raising her hands to praise God, and another was saying "Amen!" at appropriate times.

We all prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it was sheer joy to watch and see what He was going to do. I have to thank you for suggesting this team work. The Kingdom work is just that--team work."

Having a reliable care team to share in this ministry is so important. I thank God for their faithfulness. Not only are we there to fill in the gap when one is absent, but also to work together, assuring our friends are loved and hear the Good News of Jesus. Thank you, Tom, Elaine & Del for being ready "in season and out of season". ~ BG



HIS COMFORTING WORDS AND PRAYER

Those of us who spend many hours in nursing homes become a part of residents' lives. It is a privilege to step in and become like family to them in this time of their life, and even at the time of death.

Sometimes when one of my friends is dying, a nurse will call to ask if I can come to sit at the bedside, especially when there is no family. I love to be with them, to hold their hand, speak His comforting words, and sit beside them in prayer as we wait for Jesus to take them home.

But losing our friends takes its toll, especially when the losses come fast and furious. Not long ago, I lost 3 friends in the same week, and felt devastated as I saw their empty beds, knowing I would never see the precious inhabitants of those beds again in this life.

Sometimes the grief from such losses can take us by surprise and we can easily become weary. But

it is Jesus' comforting words that carry us through these valleys, giving us the strength to begin new friendships in the nursing homes. It is also God's love that compels us, for we know how much He loves these dear ones.

My thanks to all who pray for the nursing home missionaries. Great works of God are accomplished with great prayer support. ~ Elaine Edkin

Note: Because we all must experience journeys of loss and grief, especially that which comes from losing our resident friends, God Cares Ministry will be providing a seminar called, "Through the Valley of the Shadow of Loss and Grief." This will be held on the same day as our PowerNight banquet, April 27th. Come and gain a life-giving perspective on this topic. Visit our website or call our office for details and registration.



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Return service requested



You're Invited!
PowerNight 2019

Saturday, April 27th
Training 1:00-4:45pm
Banquet Dinner 5:30-8:00pm
In Bay Village, OH

Tickets are required. Register online:
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Afternoon Training Seminar:
*Through the Valley of the Shadow of
 Loss & Grief*

Learn Biblically-based principles to shine the Light of Christ into the hearts of friends that are journeying through the valley of the shadow of loss and grief.

Evening Dinner Banquet:
Be Empowered & Encouraged

For those involved in sharing God's love and Word with people in senior adult care homes. Enjoy a delicious banquet dinner along with inspirational messages from fellow missionaries.