

Freedom FOCUS

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NEWSLETTER

“...to turn them
from darkness
to light...”

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The Lord Builds the House

Psalm 127:1-5 reads, “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” (ESV)

A well known pastor made the following observation regarding the breakdown of the family and how that had impacted his pastoral duties: “Nowadays one has more to do with marriage than with all other matters. Because of them we can hardly read, preach, or study. I have observed many married couples coming together in such great passion that they were ready to devour each other for love, but after a half year the one ran away from the other. I have known people who have become hostile to each other after they had five or six children and were bound to each other not merely by marriage but also by the fruits of their union. Yet they left each other.” The quoted pastor is the reformer Martin Luther.

As I counsel with many hurting families today I am able to identify with the breakdown in the Christian family that statistics are validating. The Barna Research Group reports that 64% of churching teenagers forsake their faith



after high school. Regarding marriage the Barna Group also concluded that although many Christian churches attempt to dissuade congregants from getting a divorce, their research confirmed born again Christians have the same likelihood of divorce as do non-Christians.

One of the saddest things I see in counseling is men and women in their late forties or fifties who realize they have missed the mark in their relationship with their spouses and their children and are living with the destruction that it brings.

According to Psalm 127, the main cause for this tragic crisis is that so many men and women are “laboring in vain.” There are four ways that we can labor in vain:

- Building in our own strength—1 Corinthians 15:10.
- Leaning on our own understanding—Proverbs 3:1-8.
- Building by ourselves (“It’s all up to me” mindset)—Proverbs 18:1, 2.
- Being driven by constant and unconsidered activity (busyness)—Luke 10:38-42.

When we become too busy, we cannot have intimacy with God. It is as if

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Heart Focused Discipleship Conference

Deeper Walk International is hosting the 10th biennial ICBC Conference in Indianapolis. The theme for this conference is Heart Focused Discipleship: Ministering to the Inner Man. One of several featured speakers, Rev. Jeff Pokone will present a session entitled, *Biblical Principles for Counseling that Change Lives*.

For information, contact:

Jim Gaskill
317.896.6879
www.icbcinc.com

IBCC Counseling Training Seminars

Beginning this summer, the Indiana Biblical Counseling Center will offer quarterly, one-day seminars in effective counseling ministry. These one-day seminars are designed to equip those with a heart for discipleship ministry with practical tools they can use in their own local church or individual ministry. Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend!

June 21—8:00-5:00
October 4—8:00-5:00

For more information, contact Ron Visser at 317.585.1845

The Lord Builds the House, *Continued*

Satan's goal is to run us hard and wear us down. This is how we labor in vain. It becomes very easy to get in the routine of living our lives in our own strength, leaning on our own understanding and depending on ourselves. Satan desires to keep us busy and distracted so that we do not have an intimate relationship with God and enjoy the blessing of close relationships in our families.

Psalm 127 is an encouraging passage in finding a solution to the family crisis in our day. Instead of us laboring in our own strength to build our homes, the Lord in his power and strength builds the house. We need his blessing and grace in our lives; we cannot do it within ourselves. He is sovereign over our households. To allow the Lord to build the house rather than you striving in your own efforts, I would encourage you to:

- Guard your heart from wrong influences that interfere with your relationship with God (Proverbs 4:23).
- Love the Lord your God and His Law with all your heart (Deuteronomy 6:5).
- Listen to God and do what He tells you to do (Matthew 7:24).
- Take Christ's yoke upon you and bear the burdens he wants you to bear. Do not become distracted with things that unnecessarily burden you down (Matthew 11:28-30).

Rev. Jeffrey Pokone

Testimonies from Changed Lives

I feel real VICTORY today because my life as a victim is over. I have overcome many hurdles.

Being molested two times and being physically abused almost took my life away. I have felt suicidal for so many years I can't count. I am free from suicidal ideation. Life is worth living.

Anger, frustration, worthlessness, overwhelming thoughts of self-harm, shame, guilt, hatred—these feelings are all behind me.

I still deal with low-self-esteem, but it is much improved. I am learning to be a strong, self-reliant, independent woman.

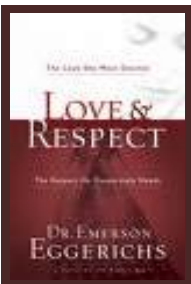
In one of the groups I am in, it was said of me that I am kind, giving, caring, easy to talk to, gives good group input. I am very nice, a good person, have a good heart. I am attractive, smart, open, honest. I have a good personality, I am sweet, adorable, friendly, and I have many strengths and much to give. These nice things overwhelmed me and flattered me so much I framed them.

Yes, I was molested and abused, but that is in the past and that is a part of me that I acknowledge, and forgive. I don't have to let it weigh me down any more.

Jeff, thank you for being available to me and walking me through the process.

We are ministering differently than we were six years ago, thanks to you. When counseling my wife, my eyes were opened to what training I needed to be more effective in Kingdom work. Thanks to you and IBCC, this ministry has evolved and is more effective in dealing with the many hurting people in this Appalachian region.

Resource Review—*Love and Respect*



Over the last two years I have been using the book, *Love and Respect*, by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs in my counseling of married couples. In fact, it is now required reading and a prerequisite for an appointment.

I have found this book to be one of the best that I have ever read personally and used in ministry. Many of our clients have benefited by the book, and it has been helpful for some couples just to understand what is normal in marriage. The book can be categorized in three parts. Part one addresses what Eggerichs calls the “Crazy Cycle,”

which is a tremendous section that shows the cause and effect relationship between a husband and a wife.

The second part of the book reviews the “Energizing cycle.” Here the author teaches on the Biblical responsibilities and needs of the wife and husband. What makes this book special is that it is balanced. He Biblically confronts the husband's need to love his wife and does a wonderful job explaining to wives the need for a man to be respected.

The last part of the book discusses the “Reward cycle.” What a blessing marriage can be to glorify Christ in our lives. I have had some clients read the book and no longer need counseling!