



Christmas Greetings

December 2011

"For unto us

a child is born,

unto us

a son is given...

and His Name

shall be called

Wonderful, Counselor,

The Mighty God,

the Everlasting Father,

the Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Greetings Friends,

God loves His children. We are privileged to have the opportunity to come alongside them and minister to their discipleship counseling needs. As we approach the celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us be reminded that He truly is the Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6). His love, power and wisdom brings freedom and healing to those we serve. As the Lord has led this ministry we believe the heart of our counseling needs to be based on five Biblical principles.

- The Scriptures are the only foundation for all wise choices we make in life. (Proverbs 3:5)
- We help our clients to understand and walk in their identity in Christ. (Colossians 2:6-8)
- We look to God to transform our client's lives by His Holy Spirit, revealing the truth of God's Word the Bible, and bringing genuine repentance. (Hebrews 4:16)
- Our clients are led through a process that helps them get to the root of their spiritual and emotional problems. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)
- We include the reality of spiritual warfare impacting our client's lives. (Ephesians 6:12)

The life-changing power of Christ was demonstrated at our recent Fall Praise banquet. That evening several testimonies of God's loving care were shared from former clients whose lives were impacted through the ministry of IBCC. We have included in this letter a portion of their stories of God's grace in their lives; I trust they will encourage your hearts.

We praise the Lord for and extend our gratitude to the many friends who support this counseling ministry and its calling to help hurting people. Your continued prayers and financial support help bring freedom in many peoples' lives. We thank you for your prayerful consideration of IBCC in your year end financial giving.

I join with my family, staff, and Board of Directors in thanking God for giving us the opportunity to serve Christ in this counseling ministry. Your prayers are greatly appreciated as we continue this ministry going strong into the New Year.

Rev. Jeff Pokone





Testimonies From Changed Lives

At the recent 2011 Fall Praise Banquet, friends of the ministry gathered together to celebrate God's work through IBCC this past year. Several individuals shared testimonies of how the Lord has brought freedom and healing in their lives through the counseling they received. We wanted to share some of those testimonies with you.

I first visited IBCC about eight years ago, a few months after I graduated from college. It didn't take long for Jeff to identify the roots of my problems. He asked how I saw three faces in my mind's eye and to pay attention to the expressions on these people's faces. The first face was my dad's, the second was mine, and the third was God's. My dad's face was compassionate—which is not surprising because he's a great guy and a fantastic dad. But my own face showed disappointment and anger—which reflected the self-hatred I was inflicting on myself. When I tried to imagine God's face, however, I struggled to see His expression. I thought God's expression toward me would depend on what I was doing at the time.

This made us see how much my spiritual identity was tied up in my "performance" as a Christian. Jeff helped me understand that God's view of me is based not on my performance or behavior, but on Christ's righteousness through which He sees me. We read through Ephesians 1 together, and Jeff encouraged me to replace the first-person plural pronouns in that chapter with my name. "My" version of the passage reads, "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed Andrew in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose Andrew in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love, He predestined Andrew to be adopted as His son through Jesus Christ, in accor-*

Jeremiah 29:11-12 says, "*I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you.*"

I first found out about counseling at IBCC after listening to a Christian radio program. I was not at a place where I could call upon Him, come to, or pray to Him. A need for some sort of wholeness was needed to even get to that place where I could talk to God. I felt like He had betrayed me, it was so strong and so overarching that it had distorted everything which was related to me and Him. I took it very personally, I felt like He had lied to me and that He was a very harsh God for whom I didn't want anything to do with. But, inside I was struggling, knowing that He had been my best friend, but I still felt like He had abandoned me.

I struggled with anger, the deep, keep-you-awake-at-night anger which became relentless and passionately focused on destroying my marriage, my children, and my soul. Root issues which needed to be addressed included understanding what to do with disappointments and disillusionment. Knowing how to properly handle negative emotions which accompanied these issues like grief, which I had never been allowed to experience. What was helpful were the listening

dance with His pleasure and will – to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given Andrew in the One He loves. In Him Andrew has redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on Andrew with all wisdom and understanding."

These truths had an immediate and significant impact on me. I felt the guilt and fear beginning to lift from my spirit, and I left Jeff's office more encouraged and optimistic than I'd been in a very long time. I took home a printout of this passage and immediately taped it to my bathroom mirror. It wasn't long before I was sleeping and eating again, but it did take a while for God to peel back all the layers of my heart and really heal the wounds in it, through the continued help of IBCC. But Christ restored to me the joy of my salvation that day, and He's been working in my life every day since.

Only a few months after I'd visited with Jeff I met a girl who would later become my wife. There's *no way* I would have been able to keep her around if I'd met her when I was in the state I was in previously. I had been miserable, full of fear and anxiety, with no sense of hope for the future. But, praise God, He allowed my wife and I to meet after He'd had time to use IBCC to bring me back home to Him and put His joy back in my heart.

- Andrew from IN

ears of Pastor Pokone, the ability to process and have someone validate what I was saying, giving legitimacy to my wounded heart and broken spirit.

I listened to the CD series, "Biblical Principles for Building a Strong Family" on my drives to and from work. It seemed my childhood and the family structure which I had grown up in and labeled as "Christian" were far from being biblically based. It took hours of listening to these CDs with lots of tears, with the groans too deep for words, and an abundance of God's grace to see the truth in how God had been misrepresented in my life from a very young age. Also my heart had become bitter because I had a very distorted view of God, His purposes, and His will for my life.

This changed my life like few things before. God was working through my small steps of obedience and His abundance of grace and love for me to woo me back to a place where I began to trust Him again and trust that His intentions for me were for good. A place where I could start to cry out to Him again and know that He hears and answers.

- a woman from IN

