

A
MESSAGE OF HOPE,
comfort and freedom in Jesus Christ

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“The Energy of Christ” by Kyle Murphy

The last two newsletters have included articles focused on hopefully inspiring action on the part of the reader to get involved in some way in sharing the hope, comfort and freedom that is found in Jesus Christ with others. This quarter I want to switch gears and speak to those of you who have faithfully answered God’s calling on your lives and who are working to advance His Kingdom here on earth.

Ministry, especially prison ministry (where the workers are very few), can become overwhelming. Serving God is an awesome blessing and there is a great deal of fulfillment found through serving Him but sometimes it is difficult to find a healthy balance in ministry. The devil would like nothing more than to see us become so involved in serving that we neglect our own spiritual and physical well-being and end up overwhelmed to the point we walk away from ministry. It is of utmost importance that we find a balance so we do not become overwhelmed. Jesus was well aware of this. That is why He set aside time to be alone with the Father.

Luke 5:16 states, “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

In Matthew 14:23 we read, “After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.”

Jesus received strength and power to carry on from God. My brother in Christ, Hunter, founder of While We Wait Prison Ministry (check them out on Facebook!), shared the following with me regarding how he gets through those times of feeling overwhelmed. [Please read the quarterly scripture verse before continuing].

“The Greek word [in verse 29] is *energeia* (n.) or *energeo* (v.). Now check this out, the same Greek word that is translated ‘energy’ in that verse is also translated ‘works in’ in the same verse. So it’s his energy working in you and it is his energy which is powerfully energizing you. Now look at Colossians 2:12. The word ‘power’ is the same Greek word. In this reference it’s the power that raised Jesus from the dead. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit. We often think of the Holy Spirit as a teacher, and as a comforter. We need to remember that He is POWER. And when we are trying to get everything done – work, home, ministry, etc. it is He who provides not only the way but

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Quarterly Scripture Focus:

Colossians 1:28-29

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.”

Teddy Bear Program

This quarter's featured ministry is called "The Teddy Bear Program." This is a program offered at Macomb Correctional Facility. It has been going on since 2005 due to the love and support of members of Grace United Methodist Church in New Baltimore.

As part of the program the class makes teddy bears, quilts, & other handmade goods that are either donated to those in need or sold to bring in more money for materials. For Christmas, they gave stockings, hats, & scarves to a local food pantry and elementary school and quilts, bears, stockings, crocheted baby sweaters, hats, & scarves to Turning Point women's shelter and Children's Hospital of Macomb. For One Day With God camps they typically make 80+ quilts for their camp along with teddy bears and bags.

Thanks to the generosity of the Crocheting & Knitting group at Clinton Township Senior Adult Life Center (especially Marlyn and Christine) as well as Roseville Church of Christ we have been able to collect quite a bit of supplies for this program!

If you are interested in donating additional supplies to assist these men in their efforts please contact us. The following supplies are needed:

Yarn, cotton solid colored fabric, muslin, or cotton prints, batting and fiberfill, or JoAnn Fabric gift cards.

Pictured is a teddy bear that the guys made for my wife and I for Christmas as well as one that she won at this year's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (the theme was "Cinco de Mayo" so the bear is wearing a sombrero!)



"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

In our January 2014 newsletter (available on our website), we introduced a new ministry called One Day With God. Over the last few months I have been able to volunteer at two camps. One at Macomb Correctional Facility – which is the prison I currently volunteer at – and another in Muskegon. In August, I plan on volunteering at a camp in Jackson. What an amazing blessing! Words cannot express the awesome power of God and the incredible ability of the Holy Spirit to transform lives.

This ministry provides reconciliation between parent and child and also provides an opportunity for Christian men and women to serve inside in a safe and pleasant environment. It was awesome to witness the walls of resentment and shame come crashing down as the love of Jesus transformed the hearts of both father and child – allowing them to re-unite with each other.

More information is available on our website (along with a short video about the ministry). There are several more camps scheduled throughout the rest of the year. Opportunities to sponsor a child are always available. The cost to sponsor a child for a One Day With God camp is \$175.

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the POWER. It is His energy we work with. You can't do it on your own energy. We have human limitations. Jesus had human limitation. It was by the POWER of the Holy Spirit that He accomplished all that He did. It's His energy, His power we turn to at the times we feel overwhelmed."

Peter discusses the same concept in 1 Peter 4:11. "...If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides..." In finding a balance in our ministry it is important that we: 1) rely on the same strength and power that Christ did – as Hunter shared; 2) build a network of supportive brothers and sisters in order to encourage and strengthen one another; and 3) find a healthy balance to ensure we do not become overwhelmed. To all of you who are faithfully serving our Lord – thank you. May God continue to strengthen and bless each of you in your ministry.



In May, we started another 12-Step study in Level II. A few members of the class have been with us since we began in December 2012 but most are newcomers. We continue to "advertise" through word-of-mouth only, rather than placing sign-up sheets in the units, and have been maintaining a class-size of 20+ men since we began. What a blessing!

These guys are awesome. Some already have a strong relationship with Jesus Christ and others are just beginning their walk with Him. It is truly amazing to see the transformation that occurs when someone is set free from the slavery of addiction and finds freedom through a relationship with Jesus.

Addiction comes in many forms – from substance abuse such as drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication to over-working, perfectionism, exercise & physical conditioning,

trying to look good on the outside (i.e. cosmetics, clothes), religious legalism, control issues, etc. Whatever the struggle or issue, we are all in need of a savior. We all need Jesus. In the James Group, we encourage each other to rely on God (and each other) rather than ourselves or our addictions. The title of our workbook, "12 Steps to a Closer Walk with God," couldn't be more fitting. The relationships that are forged in the James Group are not easily broken. Several of the men who have been transferred to other facilities have requested to continue to be a part of the class through correspondence. This is an ever-expanding component of the ministry. Weekly lessons are sent to these brothers to encourage them to continue growing in their relationship with God. Some have even started their own small groups at their new locations. To God be the glory!



Over the past few months we have started accepting submissions via Jpay, which is an email system available for those who are behind the narrow windows. This has greatly increased the number of submissions we receive! To date, works have been submitted from California, Virginia, Arizona, and Michigan. In Michigan we have received submissions from 10 different facilities already. Please check them out at:

www.BehindTheNarrowWindows.org

For those wishing to get involved...

We receive submissions daily by email and could use your help to: 1) log-in to the email system; 2) copy new submissions into Microsoft Word; 3) proofread the work; and, 4) email the final draft to Voices for Christ to be uploaded to the website!

MESSAGE OF HOPE

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Interested in receiving our
quarterly newsletter by mail
or electronically by email?

Send your request to:
murphy_k@live.com

Contact Us...

Please feel free to contact Kyle Murphy via email at murphy_k@live.com or visit the website at www.messageofhopeprisonministry.org if you are interested in finding out more about Message of Hope prison ministry or to get involved.



MESSAGE OF HOPE Ministry Schedule
@ Macomb Correctional Facility

1st Sunday of the month:

Level II church services (9:40 – 10:40 a.m.)

Level IV church services (1:30 – 2:30 p.m.)

Every Wednesday evening:

Level II James Group (6:45 – 8:30 p.m.)

Every Friday evening:

Level II Celebrate Recovery (6:45 – 8:30 p.m.)

