

March 2009

## Monthly Musings

from Brother Jeff



### Sacred Cursing

I don't cuss enough, and I'm ashamed to admit it. I can't remember the last time I said the "d" word.

My speech is too salted; my attitude too moderate. I don't get angry enough.... enough of the time.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not advocating getting all profane when some idiot driver cuts me off or when the cashier at McDonald's gets my order wrong. I'm not making a case for losing my cool more quickly when my wife fails to shut the kitchen cupboard doors or when the repairman tracks mud throughout the house. Trust me, anger isn't my problem in those areas.

*I'm talking about getting upset over what really matters.*

I can watch the evening news and hear about some poor old lady getting scammed, and my biggest concern during the commercial break is when supper is going to be served.

*(continued on page 2)*

### Testimony

by Diane McLaughlin

*"I grew up during the 1950's. I am the oldest of 7 children. We are a close family, and my parents always showed us lots of love. When I was 10 years old, I went to visit my aunt and uncle. During this time my uncle molested me. I was left confused and kept this a secret for the next twelve years.*

*As a teenager, I found it hard to fit in and isolated myself from others. To combat the loneliness, I began to steal from stores for the thrill of it. At the same time I got involved with a local church where I felt accepted and welcomed. I was baptized and became a member.*

*After graduating from high school, I went to college. I threw myself into my studies and was a good student until the party scene captured my attention.*

*I discovered that I could fit in by using drugs and drinking alcohol. I was unable to finish my degree. This only reinforced my feelings of being a failure. I went through many "love" relationships. With each breakup, I sank into a deeper depression. This eventually led to crack and heroin use. I spent 10 years in and out of jails, rehabs, and prison. As much as I tried, I couldn't turn my life around.*

*In August of 2006 I found myself totally alone, completely alienated from family and friends. After a long night of chasing a high I could no longer find, I cried out to God daily to make Himself real to me, and He began moving in my life.*

*When I was released, I had nowhere to go. The only door open to me was Life Challenge. Looking back, that was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.*

*(continued on page 2)*

***“God made emotions to supply us with the energy necessary for action”***

***Sacred Cursing*** (continued from page 1)

I can see bombs dropping in the Middle East and immediately wonder if I'm going to pay more at the pump. I can read about some case of child abuse and 10 seconds later be asking where the Pistons are in the standings.

I don't feel what I should feel.

The psalmists certainly didn't have this problem. They knew how to get worked up. Here's a sampling of some of their rantings:

- “Break thou the arm of the wicked and evil man” (10:15)
- “Break the teeth in their mouths, O God “ (58:6)
- “May they be blotted out of the book of life” (69:28)
- “Terrify them with your storm” (83:15)
- “Happy is he who repays you...who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks: (137:8-9)
- “If only you would slay the wicked, O God...I have nothing but hatred for them” (138:19, 22)

I'm convicted. I don't talk like that, and that's not a good sign.

The health of our spiritual lives can be measured by how we feel. The more love, the more hate. The Apostle Paul knew that. Immediately after he writes, “Love must be sincere,” he commands, “Hate what is evil” (Rom. 12:9).

(continued on page 3)

***“The health of our spiritual lives can be measured by how we feel.”***

## ALUMNI UPDATE



Tasha Griffin (Class of 2005) is working for American Greeting Card Company and taking online classes to obtain her ministry license. She is heavily involved at her church and shares her testimony regularly in various youth settings. Tasha comments, “I just look for opportunities to serve and glorify Jesus Christ. I am so blessed.”

***Testimony*** (continued from page 1)

*At Life Challenge I learned to abide in Christ. From the classes and structure to the role models, strongholds were torn down and new channels of grace were opened in my life.*

*I now have the peace that I sought all my life. Joy and peace sustain me. I'm in love with Jesus!*

*I graduated in December '08 and am currently doing an internship at Life Challenge. Every day I see God doing amazing things in my life and in the lives of others. I praise God for a future. He is good!”*

## **Sacred Cursing** *(continued from page 2)*

Emotions betray us. We may think we are strongly against abortion, but when we learn that 3,700 abortions occur every day in America, are we really bothered? Does our heart rate increase? Are we even tempted to utter a few “not-so-very-nice” words?

God wants us to feel deeply about certain things (like urban decay, global poverty, environmental waste, etc.). He does. God made emotions to supply us with the energy necessary for action. Emotions get us out of our chairs. They get us doing something, which is the bottom line.

I am not suggesting that we allow our emotions to run unchecked. I am not condoning abortion clinic bombings or mass shootings of the liberal news media. Emotions are meant to work hand-in-hand with reason and logic. Heart AND head.

So how do we open ourselves to feel more of what we feel? We need to change our thinking. Emotions are shaped by what we focus on, by what we consciously put before our minds. By changing our thinking, we can change our feelings.

We also must ask God to give us sensitive hearts that are in tune with what He cares about. We must regularly spend time with Him to escape the endless barrage of meaningless information that comes our way and de-sensitizes us from what is truly important. The psalmists understood this. As they lingered in the presence of a holy God, they came alive to righteousness and became evil-sensitive, evil-hating, evil-fighting people.

May God help us cuss.

**Q:** *Is alcoholism/drug addiction a “disease?”*

**A:** While there can be disease-like symptoms (e.g., physical addiction) and chemical imbalances predisposing a person to abuse alcohol and drugs, sin is the core issue. As such, the only real cure is a relationship with Jesus Christ established by repentance and faith.

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