



Christian Report

To Win...To Disciple...To Equip...To Win

Volume 10 Issue 3

March 2010

We are members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and Christian Service Charities in order to maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability.



In This Issue:

- The Forger's Fire 1
- Battling Worry 2
- Nuggets of Faith 3
- Casualties of War — Friendly Fire 3
- New Members 4
- Promotions 4
- About our Newsletter 4



CFC 10538

PO Box 1207
 Englewood, CO 80150-1207
 Voice: (303) 761-1959
 Toll Free: (800) 798-7875
 FAX: (303) 761-4577
 E-Mail: admin@CMFHQ.ORG
 Website: www.CMFHQ.ORG

The FY 2009 Annual Report is available on our website. If you would like a printed copy mailed to you contact the Home office.

The Forger's Fire — Pastor Larry Hoskins, Th.M., CMF Board of Directors

Have you ever wondered why some of the things you want most in life are so difficult to attain? The

Scripture speaks of iron sharpening iron, and the imagery of the metaphor is difficult to grasp in our modern world. Today, we think of electric grinders or a file that would sharpen a piece of iron such as a lawnmower blade. It takes only a few minutes, and that is what



Pastor Larry Hoskins, Th.M., Senior Pastor, Grace Church Aurora, CMF Board of Directors

we often expect in terms of human growth. If I can just say the right word or give the right word picture, then genuine life transformation can occur — whether it be in ourselves or in someone we are trying to influence. In this “fast food” or instant society, why would we expect anything less?

Such thinking, however, runs contrary to the analogy and to life itself. In the days when this proverb was written, they did not enjoy the luxuries of electric grinders or metal files; they had blacksmiths. A blacksmith would heat a forge with coal, select the proper metal, and then, using a bellows, heat a portion of the metal until it was red hot, bringing it to a malleable state. The hot metal would then be hammered on an anvil, usually 6 to 8 inches at a time, working

the metal to the right thickness, length, and strength. From time to time the metal would have to be reheated to get it

back to the right temperature; and it would be allowed to cool naturally while doing nothing to it, simply to help the consistency of the grain of the metal. Somewhere along the way, it would be reheated and allowed to cool while insulated, so the cooling would be slower. Many of these steps would be repeated several times. In short, iron sharpening iron is not an instantaneous occurrence; it is a long, slow, tedious process that requires a lot of hard, exhausting work from beginning to end, when the final product, a sword for example, is completed.

Sometimes we have difficulty making changes in our own lives, let alone the lives of those to whom we minister. It takes time and a lot of it to develop the right thinking and the right behaviors — all impacted by the right value system as God has revealed for us in His Word. That is why Paul described love, in 1 Corinthians 13, as being patient, and why Jesus said that all men will know that we are His disciples when we have that kind of patient love towards one an-

other. The Scripture says that love covers a multitude of sins. We have to allow one another to be “in process.”

Even Jesus experienced frustration with His disciples in the iron sharpening iron process. In Matthew 16, the Pharisees and Sadducees had come to Jesus to test Him; and He warned the disciples to beware of the “leaven” of those religious leaders. Throughout Scripture leaven had been used as a picture of sin, but the disciples didn't get what Jesus was talking about; they started talking about how none of them had brought any bread. Jesus chastised them — they were able to tell the weather from common indicators in the natural realm, but they did not have the same ability from the common indicators in the spiritual realm. He says,

“You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:8-11 NASB)

What was Jesus' point? On an earlier occasion, when a crowd of between 5,000 men and possibly as many as 10,000

(Continued on page 4)

Battling Worry — Claire Shackelford, MSW, Christian Military Wives, CMF Board of Directors

I am an inherent worrier. I come from a long line of worriers. We worry that we worry too much. I have spent the greater half of my middle adulthood fighting back the temptation of worry. Worry, fret and anxiety can easily become a way of life, and what they leave in their path is usually not productive, helpful or healthy.

I have learned that when I feel the stress butterflies fluttering I need to take a deep breath, pray, and evaluate the situation starting with this question: “What is the worst possible thing that could happen?” That question is then followed by “What can I do to change it?” If there is nothing in my immediate control that I can do to change the situation then I simply have to accept the worst possible scenario and move on. Prayer is the best solution for all worries — both legitimate concerns and otherwise.

Worriers tend to get a little “hiccup” in their brain. They constantly think about and dwell on circumstances that are beyond their control — and they don’t stop there. They take it to the next level with worries about what will happen if their initial fears are realized. They borrow trouble from a future event that will probably never happen. This becomes very problematic because it often leaves the worrier unable to act in the moment due to a paralysis caused by fear — fear of the unknown, fear of what could happen, fear of what might happen, and just plain old fear.

In Philippians 4:6, 7 we are told “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Anxiety and worry rob us of this peace that is promised — this peace that surpasses all understanding! I cannot think of a peace that is more fitting for a military member or military family member!

During my son’s first deployment, Bryan (my husband) was also away at Ft. Benning. I had to work hard at not allowing myself to become overwhelmed with fear and worry. As an inherent



Claire Shackelford, MSW

worrier, it was tough to avoid dwelling on the possibilities of what my son was facing on the battlefield. The truth is, all my worrying did not benefit either of us a single iota.

Prayer, on the other hand, has been my mainstay. In prayer I can reflect on and remember God’s nature, His power and abilities; and I thank Him for all He has done for us already. I then can ask God to keep my men safe, strong, and healthy, and to protect them from the danger around them. The burden, for the moment, is lifted. I have given my concerns to the One who is able to handle them.

After thinking about my worry problem I started developing a “top 10” list in my head of the end results worry *actually* produces.

Here are my picks:

10. Worry erodes your faith: When we focus on our own worries and fears instead of walking in faith we become weak. Our faith is built on trusting the sovereignty of God and His moment-by-moment provision for us. Worry is damaging; it is an indulgence where we allow our mind to dwell on immaterial things instead of appreciating what is actually before us.

When we dwell on what is good and before us, we are more mindful to praise the One who gives us our next breath.

9. Worry can cause medical problems: Worry leads to stress and anxiety, both of which have a negative impact on our bodies. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Within our bodies lies a wonderful autonomic system that reacts to situations instantaneously. When we are in danger we do not have to tell our adrenal glands to produce more adrenaline. Our brain sends the signal and it happens faster than the blink of an eye. When we worry we live with a tension, and our brain perceives that tension as a possible threat. Worriers live under a perpetual “fight or flight” mode. There are many good articles in medical journals that outline this very response and the detrimental effects that stress has on the human body.

8. Worry is a waste of time: Worry is a great way to waste your time! Yes, the majority of things we worry about never come to pass. Worry accomplishes absolutely nothing. I have never met anyone who could say, “Gee, I worried myself well!” or “I worried myself out of financial problems!” Worry captures your mind and imagination and takes you for a wild ride. Worriers tend to daydream or focus on what may or may not happen, so much so that they neglect to take care of important matters at hand.

7. Worry can be addictive: It may seem strange to say that worry is addictive, but it is true. There are those who feel that the only control they have in their life is this little thing called “worry.” When I worked in mental health, I had people tell me, “I can’t stop worrying no matter how hard I try!” Just like any other substance that provides a change in our body’s chemistry, I believe that the feeling of being worried can be addictive. When we worry we become preoccupied, so much so that some may achieve an altered state of consciousness as they focus on their concerns. It can be very addictive when the world of worry takes us, mentally, to a place where we feel more in control versus having to face the very real threats within our physical reality. It is a form of escapism.

6. Worry is paralyzing: We get nothing accomplished when we are worrying. We worry about possibilities — all the while neglecting the real problems right in front of us. Worry can induce “analysis paralysis” where someone will sit and analyze so many angles of a particular problem that they DO nothing, whatsoever, about it!

Folks with this particular problem often wind up with a great deal of stress and anxiety because they have a constant backlog of real problems that are waiting for decisions to be made. They have worried themselves into a genuine mess.

5. Worry is a master: Worry and the worrier have a symbiotic relationship. In this particular set-up we have the worrier who needs to worry, and worry that needs the worrier to need the worry! The vicious cycle is very hard to break. Until a worrier gains control over her thinking, and reels in her thoughts, she is captive to that worry. Our thoughts should not

Nuggets of Faith — SMSgt Tony Barnes, USAF (Ret)

I really enjoy being a major league baseball player. As a kid, I had always wanted to be one back when Roger Bradshaw and I would play catch in the grassy field across from my apartment. In case you are wondering what team I play on, I don't really have a team. I also don't have a coach who helps me become a better athlete. I don't really believe you have to go to the stadium to be a major league baseball player. I have had my feelings hurt there. People have said unkind things to me. Some of the people that go to the stadium are hypocrites. They supposedly go to the game to watch baseball but, they have a paperback book in their hands by the time the second inning starts. And, that coach doesn't have any right to tell me how to throw a baseball.

To avoid the risk of being called a liar, I admit I am not a major league baseball player. I have attended many games through the years, but frankly have not stepped foot in a major league stadium in over two years. If a person is truly a major league baseball player, there is an expectation that you would see them in a uniform playing in a game listening to his coach.

Believers in God can make the same mistake. Believers in God can

make the mistake of claiming to be a disciple of Jesus Christ while not being involved in a local church. They may pray every day, they may sing songs of worship to the Lord and they may watch television ministers preaching the gospel. However, without involvement in a local church and submitting under the authority of a pastoral ministry, they are in rebellion against the clear model of Christianity in the Bible.

This is most evident when the author of the book of Hebrews admonishes us to "not forsake to assemble together as the manner of some." The model throughout the New Testament is for believers in Christ to gather together on a weekly basis. Our faith grows when we congregate and celebrate with other believers. The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Our attendance with our brother and sisters in Christ sows seeds of faith into our life that moves us into maturity.

No, I am not a major league baseball player. I can wear a baseball cap, carry a bat, and grip a baseball as I sit in Texas Rangers stadium. However, you stand a greater chance of being hit by an asteroid than of me being called up to pitch a couple of innings to get the

Rangers out of a tight pinch. I haven't had the experience, the training or a big dollar contract that makes me a major league baseball player.

Likewise, you are hindered in your Christian growth if you are not involved in a local church. It's the same dysfunction as me claiming to be a major league baseball player without truly being on a baseball team. Refusing to submit to a pastor's care and the fellowship of believers leads to a crippled spiritual life. The church is described in Scripture as the "Body of Christ" with Jesus Christ as its head. Just as you don't have a relationship merely with someone's head, it is very abnormal to merely have a relationship with Jesus Christ as the head when it was Christ who established the church as the normative part of a believers life. Regardless of the past reasons making you less than enthusiastic about church life, God's plan to bless you involves being in relationship with His body of believers. Don't give up. Keep visiting churches and pray that God will guide you to the right assembly of people who love Jesus Christ passionately. I will be praying for you. In the meantime, what did I do with that baseball glove?

Casualties of War — Friendly Fire — ADCS Bob Flynn, USN (Ret), President/CEO

I am grieved in my spirit of late at the breaking news about all of the terrorist activity reported in the news. Not the television network news, nor even the cable news, but reports from the front lines in the battle for souls. My ears are still ringing from reports of church splits, pastoral staff resignations, mischief and misbehavior at Christian universities. What fuels the flame of this seemingly continuous conflagration that destroys lives, churches and makes impotent the work of the Gospel? It is the sin of anger! Yes, you heard it here first. Anger is a sin.

I did not come to this conclusion by way of thoughtful consideration of my intellectual prowess. It came instead by incremental illumination by the Holy Spirit as He worked upon my heart during a ten-year-long sojourn in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philipians. It could not have happened any other way! It was and is a continuance of the work that God began and will finish on the day when Christ returns (Phil 1:6, paraphrase mine). For how can mere flesh and blood stand in the

midst of Him of whom angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." For He who brings everything into conformity with His will had already spoken through the Apostle Paul and said, "Be humble, thinking others as better than yourself...In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing..." (Phil 2:3b, 14) Instead, our lives should epitomize the "attitude that was in Christ Jesus." The only innocent man who lived did not cling to His innocence but rather sacrificed himself on the altar without complaint. He could have been angry at those who falsely accused and condemned Him. He could have clung to His excellence and rightly held us in contempt. Instead He went as a lamb to the slaughter. How then shall we live? Shall we continue giving aid and comfort to the Enemy? Shall we continue inflicting casualties upon each other because our lives are not "blameless," "clean" and "innocent" "as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people."? (Phil 2:15) How then can we be angry with another without thinking too highly of ourselves?

I know that there are those who would argue with me, but C.S. Lewis pretty much covers the basis for this conclusion in his book, *Mere Christianity*.

"The law of gravity tells you what stones do if you drop them; but the law of Human Nature tells you what human beings ought to do and do not. In other words, when you are dealing with humans, something else comes in above and beyond the actual facts. You have the facts (how men do behave) and you also have something else (how they ought to behave). In the rest of the universe there need not be anything but the facts. Electrons and molecules behave in a certain way, and certain results follow, and that may be the whole story. But men behave in a certain way and that is not the whole story, for all the time you know that they ought to behave differently."

The Forger's Fire — Pastor Larry Hoskins, Th.M., CMF Board of Directors

(Continued from page 1)

more women and children were following Jesus to listen to his teaching, as the lunch hour approached, Jesus told his disciples to feed the crowd. The disciples looked at their meager resources and said they didn't have enough food. After a search, they found a boy with a paltry five loaves and two fish. But the disciples had another resource they did not see: Jesus. He multiplied that boy's lunch and fed the whole crowd, with twelve baskets left over. A similar story followed an encounter with a crowd of 4,000. Two major events provided ample opportunity for the disciples to see that they had Jesus as the most significant resource of all. Still they needed further instruction. They had to be put back into the forge, reheated, and hammered again.

It was only after Jesus' remarks that

Matthew comments in the next verse:

Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:12 NASB)

How many of us as parents have experienced a multitude of disappointments along the way as we have raised our children? But we did not quit and let the "bellows stop heating the metal in the forge." No, we kept heating the metal, hammering it again and again because we were working towards the final product: our child becoming a mature adult. That is the same kind of love and patience that we are to have with one another — iron sharpening iron.

My congregation has shown great patience with me as their pastor. I came to Grace Church Aurora eighteen years

ago, as a young married man with a wife and a few children — a man who had never been a senior pastor. I was only thirty-five years old; and I had a lot to learn about people, about life, about preaching, about ministry, and about myself. I still have much more to learn. They didn't stop and throw me in the scrap heap. They kept putting me in the fire, heating me up, shaping me with the hammer, letting me cool, and doing it all over as God has been working in my life through them. I hope I have done the same for them.

God has placed us here in each other's lives for a purpose. The Scripture tells us that the Spirit composes the Body just as He wills, so our presence together is no accident. May He continually see in us the exacting process, person to person, that it takes for iron to sharpen iron as in the forger's fire.

Battling Worry — Claire Shackelford, MSW, Christian Military Wives, CMF Board of Directors

(Continued from page 2)

control us. We are supposed to have command over them, not vice versa. Until a worrier can stop dwelling on the possibilities, then she is captive to worry.

4. Worry is a form of debt:

Worrying about the future can build up an emotional and mental debt. We "borrow" from a bank of potential future happenings to pay for an immediate need of feeling in control. Worry, like financial debt, comes with a lot of added costs. Worry does not, cannot, and will not, change what may or may not happen in the future. It will, however, borrow stress and anxiety, and deposit it into your account. All the while you will be expected to pay service charges and interest with your health and peace of mind!

3. Worry is a thief: Worry robs us of our daily peace and gratitude for

what we have been given. When we worry, we are being robbed of our current blessings; and we are swindled and hoodwinked into thinking that we are somehow protecting today with tomorrow's concerns. Worry is a con-artist that often takes advantage of us before we even know we have been had.

2. Worry is a fantasy life:

I have already mentioned that worry is borrowing from possible future events. How do we accomplish this borrowing? It is done in our minds and in our imaginations. The worrier tends to think of every possible situation that might be ahead. I would dare say that most worriers envision even very improbable situations. They may start with a thought of a possible scenario, but before long they are worrying and being consumed with matters that will most likely never come to pass.

They fantasize about all sorts of the

improbable possibilities. Instead of being rooted in reality, worry often winds up being rooted in fantasy.

1. Worry is a form of defeat:

I have a very wise friend who once told me, "If you will just remember that the only control you have in this life is the way you choose to respond to the fact that you live in a crazy, unpredictable and sometimes scary world, you will be fine!" Worry is a form of defeat because worry means we have given up on what we actually can control, and we have chosen to hide our heads in the sand. Worry allows us to hide and insulate ourselves — while fooling ourselves into thinking that we are actually dealing with our problems. Worry accomplishes nothing. Worry is counterproductive. Worry keeps us from acting in the moment when we can and how we should, and it keeps us focused on an elusive and uncertain future.

New Members

PVT Justin & Michelle Evan, USA
SSG Marcus Finley, Sr., USA
SFC Wallace & Cheryl Inman, USAR
SPC Paul & Amanda Smith, USA
PO1 Ryan & Megan Whitfield, USCG
GySgt Rosaelia Wilkos, USMC (Ret)

Promotions

CH(MAJ) Brett Charsky, USA

About Our Newsletter

Christian Military Fellowship is an association of believers who are committed to encouraging men and women in the United States Armed Forces, and their families, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. We are an indigenous ministry serving all elements of that society including all military services, all ranks, family members, civilian employees, all Christian denominations and traditions. Within the military society, our members, staff, and constituents

work to introduce people to Jesus Christ and help Christians to grow in faith. Because of CMF's interdenominational indigenous ministry expression, the newsletter articles express representative thought from the larger tent of the Christian experience. This is meant to cause our membership to consider what they believe and why they believe it. In addition, it gives opportunity for the membership to consider and appreciate what other fellow believers hold to be true as well.