

QuietWaters

C O M P A S S

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LONELINESS



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The QuietWaters
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Cartoonist: Tim Walburg

Graphic Designer: Steve Riecks

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We welcome your contribution toward the cost of this publication, as well as your comments, questions, articles and suggestions.

Write to:

The QuietWaters Compass

9185 East Kenyon Avenue, Suite 150

Denver, CO 80237

Phone: (303) 639-9066

E-mail: info@QWaters.org

Internet Web Page:

<http://www.QWaters.org>

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Our Counselors Share

from the President *Jim Schlottman*



QuietWaters Ministries is very blessed by an outstanding team of counselors. They are licensed and professionally competent, but more importantly they have years of experience working with Christian leaders.

In this issue we have the opportunity to hear from three of our counselors. The topics of loneliness and failure are issues we often deal with when serving Christian leaders. It is said that being a pastor is the fourth most difficult profession. I believe that being a missionary stands alongside a pastor as being a most difficult profession. Two things that contribute to the difficulty are loneliness and failure.

Patti Cappa begins her article with the statement, "Sometimes in life we find we have lost our passion for ministry." I can't tell you how many pastors and missionaries have shared that statement with me when they make their call to QuietWaters.

She begins by addressing our drive toward "perfectionism". She says, "Doesn't everyone just love a perfect minister, a perfect minister's spouse, a perfect missionary, a perfect minister's child, a perfect Sunday school teacher, a perfect Christian? This is such a set up for Christians whether they are leaders or not."

Cappa goes on in her article with examples in the life of King David. King David is my favorite Bible hero because although he did many great things, he also failed in a great many ways.

In his article, (Dr.) Tom Varney shares interesting insights into loneliness when he states, "In fact, the choice to embrace our loneliness can be a privileged invitation to echo the larger purposes of God."

Varney goes on to suggest that loneliness has many faces. He lists them as circumstantial loneliness, chosen loneliness, and core loneliness.

As you read through Varney's article you will come across an interesting concept that he develops. That concept is, "If loneliness is ever to be productive, *it must be accepted, not fought.*" Following that thought, I remember Varney sharing with me that in other areas of life we must go through them—pain, grief, etc.

Varney concludes his article by showing us how we can be helping others with loneliness.

We recently dedicated our new prayer garden. It was a wonderful time of celebration. Another of our counselors, Dave Ragsdale introduces us to how the prayer garden will be used by pastors and missionaries. It will be used by those participating in a Leadership Intensive, and it will also be open to local pastors and home assignment missionaries.

Ragsdale shares the three core purposes of the prayer garden: Upreach, Inreach and Outreach. It outlines how those core purposes will be practiced by those using the garden.

Enjoy hearing from those who directly touch the lives of those served by QuietWaters Ministries. ■

For additional information or to learn how you can support this ministry, contact QuietWaters Ministries in one of the following ways:

Toll Free: 1-866-5-WATERS

Fax: 303-300-6773

E-mail: info@QWaters.org

Website: www.QWaters.org



"He leads me beside quiet waters."
Psalm 23:2

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LONELINESS

by Dr. Tom Varney

Loneliness is such a common struggle and it even intrudes unexpectedly into quality relationships and supportive Christian community. Unfortunately, feelings of loneliness are often misinterpreted as an ungodly or unnecessary nuisance to be avoided at all costs, rather than being understood as an inevitable reality to be embraced for spiritual growth. In fact, the choice to embrace our loneliness can be a privileged invitation to echo the larger purposes of God.

WHAT IS LONELINESS?

If you were to ask several people if they struggle with feeling lonely, you might hear a variety of responses, because *loneliness* means different things to different people. But how we think about and define certain realities directly affects the way we experience and respond to them. So what is loneliness?

On one level, loneliness is *the pain or sadness felt in the absence of meaningful relationships*. However, it is also the *inevitable pain or sadness we feel in response to living as pilgrims (or exiles) in a fallen world that cannot fully provide the completely good relationships we were designed for*. We feel lonely when we are deeply aware of our creaturely incompleteness, or as the Apostle Paul says, “we groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:23).

On one level, loneliness is the *pain or sadness felt in the absence of meaningful relationships*. However, it is also the *inevitable pain or sadness we feel in response to living as pilgrims (or exiles) in a fallen world that cannot fully provide the completely good relationships we were designed for*.

KINDS OF LONELINESS

Loneliness has many faces, but here are a few to consider:

CIRCUMSTANTIAL Loneliness might be due to the recent death of a loved one that leaves a huge hole in our life, or a job transfer separates us from familiar surroundings and cherished friendships. People at work or home do not share our concerns or values, and we feel lonely for someone who truly understands us. Circumstantial loneliness comes from outside us and is, for the most part, beyond our control.

CHOSEN Loneliness can have a *practical* function and the other a *protective* one.

1. Practical:

This is solitude, which is a chosen isolation from people, motivated by a legitimate need to temporarily retreat from the noise, demands, and endless diversions of everyday life. It is a place to rest, pray, and even create.

In solitude, we are not preoccupied with the absence of others. By contrast, loneliness involves discomfort or pain, or a sense of separation from desired companionship.

2. Protective:

This chosen loneliness occurs when we are arranging for and actually pursuing loneliness, though not always consciously, because we *prefer it to disappointment*. The pain of loneliness seems more manageable than the painful disappointment of seeking relationship and having our effort not well received. “Why risk giving others the power to hurt me again?” It just opens the door to being rejected, misunderstood, or abandoned. It seems so reasonable and so much easier to withdraw and keep a safe distance from any relational conflict or pain. So we bury ourselves in work that consumes the hours needed to build quality relationships, and we end up seeking only useful, shallow relationships that keep our loneliness at bay.

CORE Loneliness—This is more basic to our existence as human beings, and it is seldom acknowledged in Christian community. Core loneliness lingers in the midst of our most gratifying relationships with God and with others. *It is neither unnecessary nor ungodly, but inevitable*. It exists because we live in a fallen world that awaits the completion of a new creation. It is the common lot of humanity.

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Loneliness is such a common struggle and it even intrudes unexpectedly into quality relationships and supportive Christian community. Unfortunately, feelings of loneliness are often misinterpreted as an ungodly or unnecessary nuisance to be avoided at all costs, rather than being understood as an inevitable reality to be embraced for spiritual growth. In fact, the choice to embrace our loneliness can be a privileged invitation to echo the larger purposes of God.



However, many still assume that if you know God, then you should *never* feel lonely. They view lonely feelings as evidence of a failure to fully trust in the power and presence of God in one's life. It's true that Jesus promised to never abandon us, but the truth that God is always with us is not a promise to eliminate our feelings of loneliness. To say, "God is enough!" is true, but enough for what? God promises to be enough to help us persevere, not enough to rid us of lonely feelings in this present age. Therefore, core loneliness is something to be acknowledged and embraced, not something to escape from or deny.

RESPONDING TO LONELINESS

Our response to loneliness affects our capacity to learn from it, and there are significant personal setbacks when our loneliness is denied or ignored (i.e., anxiety, depression, addictions). Problems begin to accumulate when our loneliness is...

- **Denied**—"I've never really thought about being lonely or feeling lonely."
- **Minimized**—"Yes, I feel lonely sometimes, but I should feel grateful for the friends God has given me."
- **Trivialized**—"So I feel lonely occasionally, doesn't everybody?"

So what might be a healthier, more productive response to loneliness? Here's two suggestions:

1. Acknowledge it:

You may not feel particularly lonely at the moment, but be willing to acknowledge that loneliness is a *part* of

CORE LONELINESS

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your life. This acknowledgement should carry some weight and lead to thoughtful reflection, not intellectual dismissal.

However, to accept and enter into the feelings of loneliness discloses a tension within us—facing the present reality of loneliness, while at the same time clinging to the future hope (a new creation). Many of us prefer to dismiss this tension by opting for either extreme cynicism or credulity.

- Extreme **cynicism** attempts to resolve the tension by refusing to embrace the hope of God. This cynicism becomes an effective way to absorb the intense anger one feels toward God for not relieving the pain of loneliness now.
- Extreme **credulity** attempts to nullify the tension by assuming it is an ungodly emotional response that can and should be completely

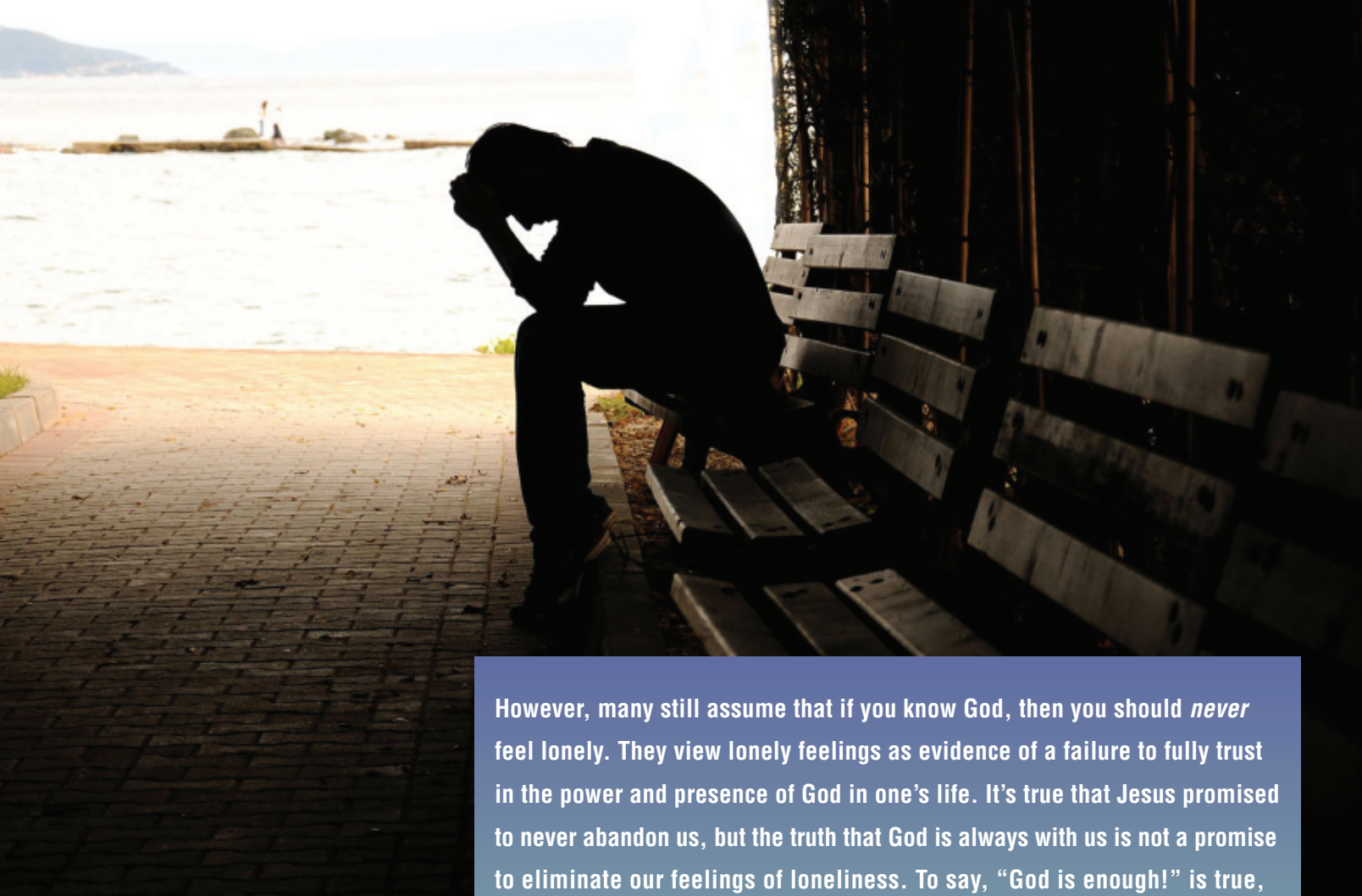
resolved by total submission to God. Any personally disruptive emotion reflects a lack of faith.

Both of these extremes invite us to live a lie by reinforcing our commitment to live in denial and make both God and life more congenial and less conflicting. However, spiritual maturity should never be defined by the absence of lonely feelings, but rather by our choice to acknowledge and embrace loneliness. In that lonely place we come to know a loving and compassionate God who calls us to live for larger purposes and love others from that difficult place.

2. Accept it:

If loneliness is ever to be productive, *it must be accepted, not fought.* We must choose to feel it, not blunt its impact. One way we blunt the impact is by immersing ourselves into caring for others as a diversion from our own pain, but this actually leads us deeper into the insecurity of always *needing* to be helpful. To fight loneliness only frustrates and diminishes our capacity for genuine compassion and our ability to be fully present for another.

Also, don't apologize or impose guilt on yourself for feeling lonely. A young pastor shared in a matter-of-fact way that a very close friend of his recently moved away to another state but he made no mention of actually *missing* his friend. So I said to him, "I would think, given your longstanding relationship, that you miss him a great deal." He took a deep breath, and with his eyes beginning to moisten, he



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quickly apologized for his display of emotion. Why? It was easier for him to apologize for his emotion than to accept it and feel the pain of loss and the legitimate longing for relationship. An apology becomes a tool of avoidance or denial of our basic neediness, and that neediness is the very basis of God's invitation to come to him (Isa 55:1-2, John 7:37-39, Rev 22:17). We need not apologize for feeling lonely any more than we would for having a cold.

LEARNING FROM LONELINESS

To embrace loneliness is not a journey into morbid introspection. It is not idolizing or glorifying the pain that often accompanies loneliness. Instead, it is accepting its inevitable presence as fertile soil for a growing mature faith. So what can we actually learn from loneliness?

Embraced loneliness *reveals our stubborn commitment to avoid the risk of any further pain and our demand for relief*. In Genesis 6:6 we

are told that God's heart "was filled with pain" because humankind had rebelled endlessly against his good purposes. Yet even though nothing had really changed (8:21), God still makes a covenant with Noah (see 9:8-16). In Matthew 26, the napping disciples fail to grasp the immensity of Jesus' struggle over his impending death... three times! Jesus says, "Are you still sleeping?... Rise let us go!"

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Our response to loneliness affects our capacity to learn from it, and there are significant personal setbacks when our loneliness is denied or ignored (i.e., anxiety, depression, addictions).

Here comes my betrayer” (speaking of Judas Iscariot). Yet even amidst this deep disappointment and rejection, Jesus does not grasp for relief but freely gives of himself from a lonely place (Phil 2:5-11).

This kind of self-giving seems so unnatural to us because when we're in pain we often feel justified in our withholding love from others, and demanding relief seems thoroughly reasonable. Unacknowledged and unexplored loneliness easily becomes a potent, governing tyrant that will move us to pursue illegitimate means of relief or diversion.

Embraced loneliness is also *a pivotal place where we can capture a vision of God and his purposes that transcend our pain*. It seldom crosses our mind that embraced loneliness could actually be an opportunity to share in Christ's suffering (Phil 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13). Instead, we feel weak, undisciplined, vulnerable, and hardly capable of blessing others. Too often we equate spiritual maturity with feeling all the “right feelings,” which either immobilizes us or forces us to live in denial. Instead, maturity is the willingness to more fully acknowledge the feelings that are there, no matter how painful or unruly they might be,

and accept them as some of the raw material God uses to shape us into the likeness of Christ. Being emotionally honest before God is very freeing and it releases us to live more passionately for larger purposes beyond the felt loneliness.

HELPING OTHERS WITH LONELINESS

How do we help someone else who is wrestling with loneliness without carelessly minimizing it or succumbing to the passion to fix things? There are at least two ways of *mishandling* someone's loneliness.

First, we feel so overwhelmed or intimidated by the enormity of their struggle that *we reduce their problem to manageable proportions*. For example: we minimize or trivialize the loneliness by saying things like, “It will pass... I used to struggle with that too... I know it must be hard for you, but you have so many good friends who care for you.” Or we often share our personal experience (without being asked to do so) and offer quick advice, which is almost always motivated by a need to reduce their loneliness to something we can handle or that doesn't disrupt us too much.

To embrace loneliness is not a journey into morbid introspection. It is not idolizing or glorifying the pain that often accompanies loneliness. Instead, it is accepting its inevitable presence as fertile soil for a growing mature faith.

Consider Job's friends. Their advice to Job is not without substance and they sincerely wanted to help Job, but their advice was “pre-suffering.” They had not entered deeply into their own hurt, loss, and loneliness that out-distances manageable explanations or steps. They had not suffered enough to have their own nerve broken. Their need for “certainty” could not tolerate the immensity of Job's tragic struggle, so they reduced the problem to something more fitting to their narrow theology. Can you imagine how Job would have responded to the “power of positive thinking”?

A second way we mishandle someone's loneliness is by *assuming that all we can provide is a point of connection*. It is obviously important to connect with one another at the level of shared pain and suffering. It's part of what it means to “carry each other's burdens” (Gal 6:2). However, if all I can provide for you is connection at the level of shared loneliness, then that relationship will lack any redemptive quality that encourages you to persevere and hope (live faithfully) amidst your suffering. Sharing our pain with one another is good! But if a lonely man meets a lonely woman at a business convention and they relate only at the level of shared loneliness, they have the makings of an affair. Most anything feels justifiable when shared pain is the only point of connection.

We gather together in Christian community as fellow-strugglers, not merely to hold hands in our loneliness, but to “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Heb 10:23-24).

Too often we equate spiritual maturity with feeling all the “right feelings,” which either immobilizes us or forces us to live in denial. Instead, maturity is the willingness to more fully acknowledge the feelings that are there, no matter how painful or unruly they might be, and accept them as some of the raw material God uses to shape us into the likeness of Christ. Being emotionally honest before God is very freeing and it releases us to live more passionately for larger purposes beyond the felt loneliness.

We meet to share our pain and learn something of a good God who calls us to love others from it. We meet to share the language of *both* despair (lament) and hope (praise).

“Christian community... is not primarily about togetherness. It is about the way of Jesus Christ with those whom he calls to himself. It is about disciplining our wants and needs in congruence with the true story, which gives us the resources to lead truthful lives” (Resident Aliens, Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, pp. 77-78).

CARING WITH CONFIDENCE

There is an alternative to these ways of mishandling the loneliness of others.

We can *enter into their loneliness with the deep confidence that God is good and delights in revealing Himself amidst the loneliness*. This doesn't mean we offer a mini-sermon on the value of loneliness or the faithfulness of God. That's obnoxious! Instead, we understand something of the inevitability of loneliness and God's desire to be pursued in the middle of it. Therefore, we are not *surprised* or swallowed up by someone's loneliness, but we choose to relate to them in a way that reflects a quiet, growing confidence that God is eager to reveal Himself in their loneliness, not just relieve them of it.

Sometimes people will be angered by our quiet, confident refusal to rescue them from the pain of their loneliness. Be aware that when you love others well in their loneliness, you will often frustrate their foolish demand for relief, and they may not feel immediately encouraged. To “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” is our privilege, but it's not always a pleasant calling.

Also, keep in mind that to enter someone's loneliness doesn't always require a heavy conversation. We also care with confidence by notes of encouragement, an occasional phone call, regularly greeting people at church, spending an hour talking with an elderly shut-in, or taking a house plant to a family that just moved into the neighborhood. These are commonsense acts of kindness that emerge from our own experience of loneliness, and we want to do what we can to give others a taste of God's goodness that provides hope to persevere.

Truly redemptive ministry comes from a courageous and confident heart that is grounded in the assurance that God is good, that God is eager to reveal Himself in loneliness that is boldly faced, and that one day God will finally dispel the pain of loneliness when He welcomes us home to a new creation (Rev 21:4).

Truly redemptive ministry comes from a courageous and confident heart that is grounded in the assurance that God is good, that God is eager to reveal Himself in loneliness that is boldly faced, and that one day God will finally dispel the pain of loneliness when He welcomes us home to a new creation (Rev 21:4). Until then, we have so much to learn from our loneliness. Don't fight it—feel it, and let it lead you to a place of deep faith without the pressure to get rid of it. It's so freeing! ■



Tom Varney

Counselor – *QuietWaters Ministries*
Pastor – *Morrison Community Church*
Affiliate Professor –
Colorado Christian University

FAILURE:

A Very Human Feeling

By Patti Cappa

Sometimes in life we find we have lost our passion for ministry. We have lost our firm grasp on why we are doing what we are doing, why we are where we are. What is our purpose anyway? One might ask how or why this happens. In my opinion, one reason for this tragedy, and there are countless others, is because men and women living a Christian life forget that they are imperfect human beings. We expect so much from ourselves, our spouses, and our families. Let's call it what it is—"perfectionism". We find ourselves lonely, isolated and defeated because, let's face it, there is no such thing as perfection for humanity with the exception of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ himself. This need for perfection often leads us to hide our failures, hide our struggles, hide our doubts about ourselves and sometimes, our doubts about God.

There are many side effects when we hide our humanity. For instance, when we hide our humanity, not only are we hiding our suffering, we are also preventing ourselves from getting much needed help and support to weather that suffering and get to the other side of it. And, inevitably we often endure negative side-effects. My friends in the medical field often tell me, "the sooner the intervention, the sooner and easier the cure." It is the same way with hiding our sufferings of emotion and character, even from ourselves. The sooner dealt with, the

Men and women living a Christian life forget that they are imperfect human beings. We expect so much from ourselves, our spouses, and our families. Let's call it what it is—"perfectionism". We find ourselves lonely, isolated and defeated because, let's face it, there is no such thing as perfection for humanity with the exception of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ himself. This need for perfection often leads us to hide our failures, hide our struggles, hide our doubts about ourselves and sometimes, our doubts about God.

better. Additionally, we are denying ourselves the opportunity to bring comfort to others. Others don't know who we are or how we have suffered and don't seek us out. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 reminds us of this truth:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Doesn't everyone just love a perfect minister, a perfect minister's spouse, a perfect missionary, a perfect minister's child, a perfect Sunday school teacher, a perfect Christian? This is such a set up for Christians whether they are leaders or not. They find that they can tell no one when they begin to doubt the existence of God, their relationship with their spouse is in the toilet or their kids are becoming delinquent. Let's even go further; what happens when we find ourselves in a hidden sin? Life happens to the Christian just like it happens to anyone else. STOP thinking you are immune to the imperfections of this world!!!! You are not!!!! I might as well mention here, neither am I. I suffer the same temptations, the same tumbling into or falling head first into sin as anyone and everyone.

We have such a great example in King David. He cries out to God many times, "Where are you?" "Why don't you save me?" "Thank you for saving me!" That is why the Book of Psalms is such a GO TO book for many of us. The Psalms exemplify the struggles we all have. Yes, David was an anointed King of Israel and did he ever fail from time to time! And, you know what? Ultimately, he didn't hide it. How would you like to hear from your trusted advisors that your son was a traitor plotting to kill you? How would you like to hear from a trusted advisor

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There are many side effects when we hide our humanity. For instance, when we hide our humanity, not only are we hiding our suffering, we are also preventing ourselves from getting much needed help and support to weather that suffering and get to the other side of it. And, inevitably we often endure negative side-effects.



that you were an adulterer and a murderer? David's life was an open book. Check out 2 Samuel and see for yourselves. David did hide these things from even himself for some time. He was trapped in lustful sin with Bathsheba and tried to hide his sins by committing ever more and devastating sins. He was so desperate to protect himself that he didn't even see himself for what he was doing. Like David, we all can and do deceive ourselves into rationalizing our sins or simply hide our eyes. **"Oh, it's not that bad. People do much worse things. No one knows so no one will get hurt. If anyone knew the truth, I'd lose my job."** This is where, as a counselor, I imagine myself confronting him or her and saying, **"Really, what about your own soul? What about the sin you are building up in your own heart? Don't you deserve the same love and care as anyone else to fight the battle? And, last but not least, thank you for telling me and let's get started."** Fortunately, when confronted, David didn't rationalize or deny those truths spoken by his advisors. He didn't go and lock himself in a closet and pretend it wasn't happening. It even seems he was shocked by his own blindness. Fortunately, he didn't keep up his charade. I am grateful for the example of David facing his own sin, being broken by it and continuing to seek God. There were grave side effects for his sin and yet, he still went to God and stayed in community. So often we will run from God, our loved ones, and trusted friends as we live in shame

I am grateful for the example of David facing his own sin, being broken by it and continuing to seek God. There were grave side effects for his sin and yet, he still went to God and stayed in community. So often we will run from God, our loved ones, and trusted friends as we live in shame and guilt instead of seeking God and community through confession and repentance.

and guilt instead of seeking God and community through confession and repentance. In Chapter 22 of 2 Samuel, after much of the family drama had played out, David sings a song of praise which echoes in several Psalms. Here is a portion of it, verses 17-19.

*He reached down from on high
and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
They confronted me in the day of
my disaster,
but the Lord was my support.
He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.*

I can't help but think that David may have seen himself as his own powerful enemy as I ponder the words above.

Bravo for David as he sought help from God and from the human beings in his world. Should you and I do any less? And, what is so strikingly true, even after all of this drama, David still wasn't perfect. It makes him so appealingly human just like you and me!

I encourage people to be human. I encourage them to lament over their sins, to cry out in joy for their accomplishments, to express their sorrows over their sufferings, and to grieve their losses. Why is this so important? It's crucial because, first and foremost, we all must be genuine and authentic human beings. Otherwise, we are just actors, faking people out. Aren't we? That only lasts so long, doesn't it? Don't you forget who you are? I ask you to go through the pages of your book. I ask you to reveal your humanity. I encourage you to be yourself in the safety of a confidential counseling environment and with safe family and friends. The things you learn in the counseling room, I ask you to take back home with you. Find people at home that you can be honest with, play with, cry with, work with, study the Word of God with and join the rest of humanity. Welcome! ■



Patti Cappa

Counselor – *Quiet Waters Ministries*
Former Executive Director
and Co-Therapist – *Marble Retreat*

The QuietWaters

Prayer Garden

By Dave Ragsdale LPC

New Paths for Leader's Spiritual Journey

I was recently asked about our ministry vision and I was reminded QuietWaters has always been very “place” oriented. Our vision states “To ensure that every Christian leader and their family *has a place* to seek and find restoration and renewal.” Our ministry is a safe and nurturing *environment* for transformation to occur in the life and ministry of each leader coming through our program. It is a *place* for restoration of vision and renewal of the leader's calling. It is a luminal *space* where the Spirit guides the leader into the deeper places their heart must go to cross the threshold into God's holy presence. QuietWaters Retreat Center is simply a place where grace happens. In 2009 we were blessed to acquire our Retreat Home and literally expand our boundaries and opportunities in serving leaders.

Recently our place has changed quite dramatically. Our backyard has been transformed into a place of prayer. It took vision to transform the high maintenance and seldom used backyard pool into a landscape which now is conducive to prayer walks and outdoor fellowship with God and others. As a well groomed prayerscape, it offers our guests, both those staying at the retreat and those who may visit our Garden for the day, a chance to kneel at one of our granite prayer benches while mediating before a cross with scripture in hand. Poised on the pastoral slopes of Parker it provides



new opportunities to foster that restoration and renewal which is at the core of our vision.

The newly designed place of prayer also gives our counselors additional options as they recommend spiritual exercises which help their clients assimilate what they are learning in the counseling office in a more experiential way. While we talk a lot in counseling, our model is not just more talk therapy. Exercises and assignments may take

the form of healing rituals, journaling prayer, writing and reading Laments, praying with your spouse, anything that calls “deep unto deep” in a life giving way. As our counselors typically assign some type of homework between sessions, the Garden Prayer Paths, Prayer Benches and the remodeled Caboose all present delightful creative spiritual spaces for clients to experience God.

(Continued on page 14)



Photography by Anette Schlottman

While the Garden is also just a great place to unwind, watch the deer and soak up the ever blue Colorado sky, in this place we seek to fulfill three core purposes: Upreach, Inreach and Outreach.

First and foremost it will be a place of praise as we reach up to God in prayer, song and celebration! In our journey with God there can always be a spirit of praise and thanksgiving. It may be the lifting of hands, kneeling in prayer, singing a hymn or praise song but

there will be praise fitting to our loving God Almighty. Our Host Couple was recently blessed when one of our clients invited them to join a celebration of praise around our fire pit. As the guitar was strummed their voices were lifted up in a beautiful harmony unto the Lord, a scene glorifying God and aptly fitting our garden setting. It may simply be experiencing his presence through creation, His natural revelation to us all. The sheer awe of a soaring hawk or

seeing a doe and her fawns in our Front Range backdrop can stir the soul to worship. A guest recently described a spiritual breakthrough with Christ while sitting in our hot tub lifting his hands to the Lord on a cold and snowy December morning. Living a life of deception, this leader celebrated a cleansing and freeing moment as he felt his sins were washed whiter than snow with Jesus ever-present as his High Priest. He left that experience promising never again to return to his former life of addiction. God's glory was again exalted in that transformational moment.

Secondly, our Garden will be a place for Inreach. There are many ways to deepen the focus on a leader's often neglected interior life. While the psychotherapy we provide is a form of soul care in our setting, our entire Intensive process nurtures spiritual formation and related disciplines as additional catalysts for redemptive change. Formation enriches the practice of prayer and in our Prayer Garden model we will seek to expand the Prayer's experience as they resonate with God's prayer book, the Psalter. We have selected the Psalms as the most appropriate focus for the Prayer Garden. Through their mediation on various passages, participants will reflect on the joys and sorrows of life as they seek to keep growing in faith and stay vital for ministry. Tom Varney, one of our trusted counselors who has helped design the prayer focus of the garden, said "The Psalms address the full range of emotional expression and give us permission to

As a well groomed prayerscape, it offers our Guests, both those staying at the retreat and those who may visit our Garden for the day, a chance to kneel at one of our granite prayer benches while mediating before a cross with scripture in hand. Poised on the pastoral slopes of Parker it provides new opportunities to foster that restoration and renewal which is at the core of our vision.

be deeply human in our life with God. In all their passionate praise and protest, the Psalms remind us that *everything* is proper for prayer and we are invited to bring our *whole life* before God in prayer, not just those parts that are congenial and easily manageable. The Psalter brings to speech the wonders and risks of life in faith that must be voiced candidly in every season of our life." The language and human experience we see in the Psalms capture every season the life of a leader will encounter; seasons of well being, seasons of anguish and lament, and seasons of thanksgiving. Certainly the feelings of loneliness and failure, which our Compass authors have just mentioned, will be taken up as themes in these beautiful Hebrew poems. The Psalm focus of our garden paths will enable leaders to pause and pray through these various seasons to enliven and authenticate their Inreach

experience. All this will lead to more Upreach in the journey.

Lastly, our Garden will be place for Outreach. While in solitude we may often pray alone, prayer is not an isolated but communal practice. Our Prayer Garden is an invitation to our larger leadership community. With open arms we want this place of grace to be that safe environment for any Christian leader, especially those local, to take advantage of the special setting and all it may offer to them. With authorized access, we envision local pastors making reservations for guided or unguided daily retreats. Spiritual Direction may be made available. Clergy couples or entire families may come to worship. Staffs or boards may hold prayer gatherings and retreats utilizing the spaces. While the options are many, the message is clear from all of us at QuietWaters, "you are welcome," join us in prayer for the lives of leaders and their families.

As we seek to steward the Garden and the entire QuietWaters Retreat property we covet your prayers and trust the Lord to enable us to serve more leaders and fulfill our vision. ■



Dave Ragsdale

**Vice President for Counseling
and Team Training –**
QuietWaters Ministries

Quiet Waters Ministries
9185 East Kenyon Avenue, Suite 150
Denver, CO 80237

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“He leads me beside quiet waters.” Psalm 23:2



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The comprehensive ministry to pastors, missionaries and other Christian leaders and their families.



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