



Reflections

Samaritan Women - Community AfterCARE Resources
Assisting women coming out of jail and prison to live godly lives

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Nancy Notes ...

by Nancy Dixon

A Bit Like a Porcupine / Handle with Care

Most of us get along with most people, most of the time. But what about the ones that seem a little like getting close to a porcupine? Just like our friend the porcupine who bristles when feeling threatened, *we do too on occasion*. Sometimes it is a learned behavior that is used to deal with traumas of life.

When a porcupine feels threatened, it assumes a defensive posture—head and shoulders lowered, back to the threat, every quill erect, tail thrashing back and fourth. They don't really throw their quills, but the quills come out of the porcupine's skin easily and quickly become embedded in the nearby enemy – *when upset, we tend to bristle and attack others with words that may stick in the offending person*. Wound caused from the quills can cause infection, even death— *our words also can poison a relationship or even end it*.

Our women have come through some really tough situations in their lives. Some had traumas while they were a child, some while out there making wrong choices that led to various forms of abuse. When some of our women come to us they really don't know how to develop good relationships because they have dealt with so much pain and there is a lot of mistrust formed in relating with people.

As we help them look at ways to build new lives, one of the things that is hard for them to realize is that unhealthy relationships can detour them and keep them



from moving forward. We can point these things out to them, but they are the ones who make the choice to listen or reject our advice. Especially where there is love involved. As we all know there is truth to the statement that "love is blind".

Building good relationships with others takes time, energy and practice and quite frankly, God. It is important for each of us to get to know God and experience His love as well as who we are in His love. Building this relationship with God helps us feel secure. Only then we can best reach out to others in love as God has planned for us to do. God's love is different from man's love in that it is not dependant on anything we do. It just keeps flowing.

We're offering some helpful classes to the women which will help them build strong relationships. Mark Baker, who has counseled a number of our women with life issues and has taught our Anger Resolution class, now is teaching Dating & Romance. This class teaches

our women godly wisdom in dating relationships as well as warning signs in unhealthy relationships. Our women have shown that they are eager to improve in this area. Another class starting and being taught by Bernadette Broughton-Countee', is 'Burying Your Past & Beginning Anew'. Often times, our women don't know how to let go of hurts from their past and this affects who they are today and how they react to others. This class will help them move forward in their lives.

We are hoping that you will take the opportunity to become a special friend, a mentor, and build a strong relationship with one of our ladies. Come and take our mentor training and then encourage one of our women on a regular basis.

One thing about God's love is that it never runs out and it is always making us and others look, act and feel better. You can pet Porcupines (stroking only from front to back), only after the Porcupine has developed trust with the handler. *God as "our handler" can be trusted to help us respond to His love for us and that of others, so that we can have close relationships with Him and others.* **God has designed us for relationships but we need to handle them with care.**



Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

Our Story Updates...

By Christie Symonds

Hello. My name is Christie. I praise God for bringing me this far. I have been fighting with God since my parents got saved when I was 13 years old. Up until I was 13, I was raised around drugs, alcohol and violence.

When my parents decided to change I thought it was a joke, so I continued to progress in my life of drugs. During my teen years, my parents forced me to go to church. I felt God pulling me then, but I ignored Him. Instead, I became involved in drugs and alcohol. I was also involved in gang activity for about six years.

I'm 23 years old and I have been to jail, prison and in and out of programs since I was 17 years old. I was unable to successfully complete the various programs in which I was involved due to lack of support and learning life skills. What always got me was having to wait, wait to get a job and learning patience. I would end up getting distracted before I was able to make something of myself. The last time I relapsed, I don't even know why I did it, but it made me realize that I was so tired of living a life of sin and was now ready and willing to be who I'm supposed to be, a child of God.

Everything was easy to drop out of my life except for men. That's what led me to Samaritan Women. I wanted to get out of my head the head games I played with men, and the sin I couldn't get rid of; so on March 26, 2004, I became a resident of the TLC Home. A few weeks later I found out I was pregnant with my daughter Jamie Starliza Cole. While at the TLC Home, I did learn for the first time how to pace myself, setting practical goals and completing



them one at a time. I learned how to have a schedule, how to plan meals, how to budget my money.

I soon began attending school at Heald College, preparing for my future. Attending school and being pregnant too was a real challenge. I'd get up at 5:30 every morning to start my day, and each day was long and filled with many activities and responsibilities.

When I first started attending school, I thought I would have a hard time understanding the instructions for the school work and the homework. I didn't think I would be able to do my homework on my own without a tutor. But about a month into school, I realized that I am capable and that God could and did give me the strength to do it all, and to understand my school work. One of my favorite scriptures is Philippians 4:13, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" I know that God is who got me through all the challenges that came my way.

While in the TLC Home, I feel I was able to help the others by living and being an example in showing them that they can do it too, with God's strength. On November 5, 2004, I graduated from the TLC Home.

Now every day when I wake up, I continue to make the right choices in my life, not just for my relationship with God, but for the precious gift God has blessed me with, my daughter. Now I've done things I thought I would never do like going to college and getting straight A's. But most of all, I'm steady in my relationship with God.

2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*"

Nana's Box...

Children's Enrichment Manager...

In a split second it was done, a couple of inches of golden curls fell to the floor. They were hardly missed amongst so many long blonde curls, but as is typical with children a lot more was going down than a little hunk of hair. Two sisters make a daily game of competing for mom's attention. This little trick works well; it gets an immediate response from the adult in charge. The older sister plays into this game by relating a triumphant tale of what's going to happen when mom finds out.

This is a quite common scenario with many variations, often played out daily, especially when parental attention must of ne-



cessity be spread a little too thin. Here in the Children's Center sometimes the clock moves backward and things slow down, on purpose, so that some good work, focused conversation, can come from just such a scene. But in today's hectic world golden moments are too easily missed. Moms need lots of support and someone to share their concerns regarding their children.

Our children need mentors; their moms need encouragement and direction. We need your invaluable investment as a volunteer to build into these precious lives by giving a little time to a child in productive conversation, reading a delightful story together or simply play a game. Showing moms new ways to respond to old challenges is what it means to give yourself as a volunteer. **Come in or call us to find out how you can make a difference with one to three hours a week.**

BULLETIN BOARD

Easter is March 31st!

WE ARE MAKING
BEAUTIFUL BASKETS!



We are taking orders for Easter baskets for all ages: children, grandchildren, or friends. Those who purchased them last year will attest to how great they were! You can order according to age and cost. Call Pam at 227-2190 to order your baskets today!

'OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED!'

Mentor's Needed

(Call to sign up, 227-2190.)

Our Women are wanting a special friend to come alongside and encourage them along the way. You can be someone that will make a difference by offering a listening ear and love to one of our women. An average of 1 to 2 hours together weekly is needed to better build relationships. For more information regarding training class, please call 227-2190.



**SAVE the
DATE!**

Mark your Calendars!

October 13, 2005

Fall Fundraiser/Silent Auction

Please consider donating to our fall fundraiser.

- Sponsors needed
- Auction items needed

PEN PALS NEEDED

How would you like to invest into the life of one of our Samaritan Women? These women are eager to have a friend who can offer them encouragement and friendship. Last year we matched 21 women from the community to 21 women in prisons who were asking for pen pals. We currently have approximately 7-8 women on the waiting list. Please call Pam at 227-2190 for



The Zonta Club of Fresno
Is Inviting YOU to their 27th Annual Fashion Show!

"Pretty as a Picture"

March 12, 2005

11:30 a.m. Social Hour

12:30 p.m. Luncheon

Tornino's

5080 N. Blackstone

**"Proceeds From Fashion Show Will Benefit"
Samaritan Women**

Get your tickets TODAY: Call Leveta 559-434-0255 or Penny 559-439-4626

Zonta International is a worldwide service organization of executives in business and the professions working together to improve the status of women.

Samaritan Women

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Current Needs

****Women's Ministry Office is in need of:**

- Bus Tokens: 5 pk/\$4.25 or 10 pk/\$8.50

****Special Events**

- Easter Basket fundraiser: We need baskets with handles, grass, small stuff animals or toys, candy, Easter tracks, clear plastic wrap.

****Children's Enrichment Center is in need of:**

- Healthy Snacks & Incentive rewards for children

****Office Equipment/Supplies:**

- Coffee/Creamer/Sugar
- Styrofoam cups, paper plates, plastic ware.

****Postage Stamps, \$37 per roll**

**** Gift bag items (Deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo, body spray, candy kisses, tissue paper, necessities)**

**** Items to help our women**

- Canned goods (tuna, noodles, boxed foods, power bars, microwaveable foods)
- Gift Items such as umbrellas, gloves, socks & underwear (various sizes), jewelry, nail polish, lipsticks, hairbrushes and combs

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