



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



"It's your kindness that leads us to repentance, oh Lord." These are lyrics to a worship song taken from Romans 2:4, emphasizing the key role that kindness plays, in our own lives and in how we can draw others to Christ. It all starts with kindness – first from God for us, then from us for others.

In his book, *Uncommon Graces*, John Vawter says: "Kindness is an attitude of graciousness, a generosity of heart. But it doesn't stop there; it leads to *acts* of kindness. Kindness won't let me stand back and watch you in some kind of trouble and just think sympathetic thoughts about you. Kindness doesn't allow me simply to make a prayerful wish that God bring someone into your life to meet those needs. I must *be* that someone. The kindness *inside* requires expression *outside*."

Jesus Christ was kindness incarnate. He ate with sinners, healed the sick, fed the hungry and showed compassion to all. Because we receive kindness from Him, we're able to offer kindness to others. In fact, we're commanded to – the second greatest commandment is to "love our neighbor as ourselves."

But what holds us back? In "The Magnificent Vision," Lloyd John Ogilvie offers one explanation: when we carry a lot of guilt for past sins or unkind be-

haviors, we often act in unkind ways to reinforce our own low opinion of ourselves, continuing the cycle of guilt and shame. So an important first step is to accept the forgiveness Christ already offers us, learn to forgive ourselves and realize our past actions do not define us. As believers, we can live out the kindness we know in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks to Christ's lovingkindness, we are forgiven and we are empowered to forgive and to show kindness.

Kindness on God's part is a deliberate act to bring sinners back to God. It shows the patience of God and is calling us to repent and turn to Him. I'm so glad that God is patient and kind to me, giving me time to respond to His love. I am also drawn to people who show me kindness, rather than rudeness.

I have been overwhelmed by people's kindness to me and to the

"Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?"
Romans 2:4

women we serve. There are many examples from our recent Tri-Tip Dinner Fund Raiser: someone saw that we were running out of meat, and bought \$300 worth out of their own pocket; many people worked long hours to cook and serve; those who had to wait for their food did so graciously and with a camaraderie that was contagious, even among the stressed workers. I could go on and on. I was overjoyed, even through the hard times – that was kindness in action.

Have you experienced a time when someone was kind to you – not because they had to be, but just because? Have there been times when you followed through and you experienced the joy of demonstrating kindness to someone? Me too, and that is so rewarding. I also can tell you I missed some great opportunities. You know what I mean. Here we have this wonderful opportunity to be used by the Lord and we fail to report for service and miss the joy God has in store for us. Let's be alert to opportunity to be kind to others.

God has us here for each other. Here at Samaritan Women, we hope to help women who may not have received much kindness in their lives find love, compassion and kindness from us – to the extent that they're then able to pass that along to others. Our ultimate goal, of course, is that kindness will draw us and the women to God in a safe and loving environment.

My Story...

By Rachelle Norton

Hello. My name is Rachelle Norton. I am the third of eleven children in my family. I am a mother of two and a grandmother of three. My daughters currently live in northern and southern California.

I began my life of crime when I was 18 (it was undercover). I was introduced to crack and from that point, it went downhill. (I was an out of the closet drug user.) My family would have nothing to do with me. All I had was the 'crack'.

I eventually found myself in jail. While I was incarcerated, my grandmother passed away and I was not able to be there with her. My grandmother wanted me at her bedside, but I was in jail. I freaked out when I was told about my grandmother being ill. Brenda, the chaplain at the Fresno County Jail, came to me. She was the angel God sent on my behalf. I soon began attending the Life Changing Classes offered at the Fresno County Jail, and I began doing the Gospel Echo's Bible Studies which helped me know God more and know His love for me.

It wasn't long before I began enjoying my life once again. I was released from the Fresno County Jail and went to CAP. I then moved to a sober living home. I did relapse a few times, but God loved me and was very patient with me during that time.

Today I am a child of God. My family and I have a great relationship. I belong to First Friend-

ship Baptist Church in Selma. I also work for the church. I am very active in all church programs. If it is not church related, I don't go.

I am also involved with Samaritan Women. I take classes that are offered at the Center. I also attend Bible Study on Wednesday mornings at EV Free Church. I come to the Center to hang out with other Christian women. Samaritan Women is a part of my daily routine. Without God, the church and Samaritan Women, I would be a lost soul. God knows better than anyone I have met.

I have been an angry person for so long. But since God has come into my life, my anger is slowly disappearing. For example, I was on the phone with the Child Support Services Unit. They were making me very angry and frustrated. I found myself feeling inside like I was going to explode. At that moment, I let the lady I was speaking with know I was a new Christian and I was trying very hard to do things different now and to act like a godly person. So I told her to please be patient with me because God would see me through this. She then stated to me, "Well praise God. I understand your frustration." She put me on hold and came back and said, "We (child support) do make mistakes." So God was in my life and already changing me at that time because it could have been worse.

God loves me and today with God, I can love myself. I can see life better through God's eyes. I choose to have faith in God and put Him first in my life today. Today I am grateful, blessed and loved by someone, God and 'me'.



Nahum 1:7. "The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him..."

Nana's Box...

Children's Enrichment Manager...

I didn't know that **Imani** could sing, and especially I did not know, nor would have guessed, that her voice has soloed for her church on a specially produced CD. She is only five. When she and her brother first came they were wide-eyed at all the things they could get into at the Children's Center, and kept happily busy until their tired mom came to pick them up. And then, like others, they did not want to leave. Mom could hardly hide the fact that she was at her wit's end. She seemed so hopeless that I really did not expect that she would ever make it back. There are so many who come through who only offer us a brief opportunity to impact for the Lord.

But they returned. This time mom was more willing to wait for her children to finish their project before they had to catch the bus. She began to talk about her own singing, and showed me the CD she was using to practice for a special performance at her church. It was the **Alabaster** song, one of my favorites. Then she said that she and her daughter sang a lot together and that her daughter loved to sing. So I asked if she would sing for me. She was more than willing, and soon was singing Acappella her own beautiful version of "This Little Light of Mine." I was amazed at the fact

that she was not just singing, she was *ministering*, at only five she already understood how **Jesus** is really all there is when life seems nothing but pain; it came through in her beautiful child's voice.

Her mom was relieved and grateful that her visits to **Samaritan Women** had been productive; she is no longer homeless. I haven't seen this family for a couple of weeks now; I don't know when they will be able to come back and share again. I pray that next time, however fleeting the moment, will be one that **you, the volunteer**, will be privileged to experience. As desperately as they need our love to move forward in their difficult journey, we, who think we are here to help them, need the love and inspiration they so simply give. **Come and discover with us** the ever changing thrill of ministry as a volunteer.

A recent article in the Bee quotes a noted child specialist, Dr. Bruce Perry who was a featured speaker at a conference focusing on improving the quality of life in the valley, as verifying that the difficulties adults have correlate to the quality of adult-child interaction they had when they were small. He pointed out that even very poor homes often have two color television sets; that adult-child interaction in homes today is minimal and plays into a big emotional deficit that later leads to all kinds of difficulties at the adult level. Our children need solid, caring connections with adults.



BULLETIN BOARD

Help Support Samaritan Women



Buy Your Fireworks At Our Stand!
(Riverpark in Lowe's Parking Lot)

Our Stand Will Be Open:
June 30, 2005 - July 4, 2005
10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Plan your 4th of July fireworks by purchasing scrip NOW (receive tax deduction as a donation on the fireworks you purchase using scrip) and use scrip to purchase your fireworks in July. Call the Center at 227-2190 to purchase your scrip.

\$ Matching Grant Opportunity \$

Opportunity to grow your gift by matching grant opportunity. Every dollar is doubled up to \$5000 for new donors...what a deal! God is making a way to do some great things around here through this offer. Will you prayerfully consider building into Samaritan Women by marking your donation "matching grant". We have until December 31, 2005.

Mark your Calendars!

October 20, 2005

Fall Fundraiser/Silent Auction

Please consider donating to our fall fundraiser.

- Become a sponsor
 - A wide variety of auction items needed
- Contact Liz at 227-2190!

Mentor's Needed

(Call to sign up for the next Mentor Training, 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.

This Is How We Feel...

Connie says: "Samaritan Women has been a place for me to really get to know Jesus through other women and to be able to share my heart and my love for the Lord with others who are struggling. It's been such a safe place for me, a loving atmosphere that builds women's spirits, their self-esteem and gives all the opportunity to know the Lord more. Samaritan Women has changed my life and impacted me greatly, a place where I'm able to see the love of Jesus in action."

Jacey says: "Samaritan Women accepted me as I was coming out of jail. They opened their heart of love to help me find a place to live, and offered classes that I could grow in to become stronger in God's Word and His love. Samaritan Women believed in me. Samaritan Women matched me with a mentor, which has been the blessing of my life to have a woman of God being a part of my life and helping me to see how to live properly for God."

Toni says: "As I sit here today, I thank God for another day. I have peace and joy in my heart. I'm learning to keep Jesus on my mind all my waken hours. He keeps me from most of the unpleasantness of this place. I look at all the joys of the world and know that God is among us. I hope I'll have your support when I get out. I'm going to need it. Maybe I'll get to join your group and help others, be supportive to those that need it and love those that need it. All I want to do is to make people happy, to share my love that God gave me. I'm happy that you write me back with questions and answers to my letters."

Gala says: "Thank you for connecting me with my new pen pal. Our correspondence has started. As I write, I pray for those I am writing to, as well as those that I mention in my letters. One last thing. Please, could you find a special pen pal for my friend I'm ministering to?"

Samaritan Women

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RETURNSERVICEREQUESTED

Current Needs

****Children's Enrichment Center** is in need of Healthy Snacks for our hungry kids, incentive rewards for children, stickers. We also need a small refrigerator to keep juices and perishables for the staff and children. We were recently donated a DVD/CD player; however, our television will not support this. We need a TV with audio/visual input/output connections.

****At the Center** we go through a lot of cups, coffee, creamer and sugar while the women are here for classes or appointments.

****Postage Stamps**, \$37 per roll. We send a lot of cards to encourage our women for their birthdays and to remind them of classes.

****Bus Tokens:** To help our women with transportation, when needed, so they can attend classes and case management, we provide bus tokens averaging 100 or more tokens per month. Bus Tokens cost: 5 pk/\$4.25 or 10 pk/\$8.50.

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