



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

Choosing our Friends and Being a Good One

February is the month often associated with friendship, caring and love. Someone has said, "A friend is a gift we give ourselves." Choosing to put God first in our lives may bring some hard decisions about the people with whom we spend our time. The friends that we are with will influence us.

Sometimes I talk to women who have just accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they have shared that they have had a hard time cutting ties with old friends that they love who are still involved in crime, drugs, alcohol and the negative things of that lifestyle. Some have expressed being lonely while trying to stay away from the old friends. They love the people but see that being near them is a real danger to their sobriety and new life. They struggle, wanting to be with their friends, those they have fond memories of enjoying time together. Momentarily they forget all the pain and heartache they also had. As women come and are beginning to build a new life, they want to see their friends have the desire to change also. They are concerned for their friends as well and put themselves in dangerous situations by going back to old hang outs to help their friends. Often their friends just see them as weird and aren't ready or willing to make changes yet. This scenario presents a real danger of relapse.

New friends are just on the horizon. Coming to Samaritan Women is a good place to develop new friends that are interested in seeing all succeed. Some may even be women that you knew before and did old negative things to-

1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character."



gether, who have changed and want to help you.

Our alumni understand how women just starting out feel. They have been there and are eager to get to know you. They will be someone you can learn from and enjoy sharing time doing fun and positive activities. You can ask us for a peer mentor; you may have thought of this person like a sponsor. Making the move to new friends takes effort, but most that come find they like the people and the love they find.

The Bible gives some good advice for us on the subject. Let's take a look: *Ecclesiastes 4:10-12* "If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up..." (*Proverbs 17:17,19*) And ways the Bible encourages us to act are found in *1 Thessalonians 5:11*, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" and also warns us in James 4:11-12 about speaking or judging against others. Another important part of building strong godly friendships is to build roads of understanding and trust. So when someone has offended you or you offend them, seek and offer forgiveness quickly. *Luke 6:37-38* "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven..." (*Colossians 3:13-14*)

I like the advice in Charles Stanley's January 2004 InTouch Magazine, to build right relationships.

"In order to become the people God

wants us to be, it is essential that we choose the right relationships. The relationships we should pursue are ones that:

* Build our confidence in God as well as in ourselves; *Encourage us when we are troubled and despondent; *Energize us when we are weary; *Comfort us when we are hurting; *Forgive us when we make mistakes; *Love us unconditionally; *Confront us when we go astray; *Serve us when we are overextended.

It is good to ask ourselves if we have anyone in our lives who fills the needs mentioned on this list. It is also important to discover what relationships may be dragging us down or deflecting us from the path of godliness. When this happens, we may have to separate from these individuals.

Now, let's look at the same list from a different angle. Ask yourself, Am I the person who lifts and steadies others in their walk with God? We can determine to provide those qualities to people around us. Such relationships are among life's greatest treasures."

Fun Fellowship Friday

The 2nd Friday of each month is set aside for you, your family, & friends to come join the fun, meet new friends, just relax & enjoy the evening.

February 13th

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Fresno Evangelical Free Church
Room 212
(upstairs in the Atrium Building)

**Friendship Theme
Potluck**

Last Names A-L, Main Dishes

Last Names M-R, Side Dishes

Last Names S-Z, Desserts

(Children's Program for Kids.)

My Story...

By Rosie Zepeda

Hello, my name is Rosie. I grew up believing that God didn't love me since my own father didn't love me enough to stick around. I didn't feel loved by my mother, because she was physically abusive towards me. I was second to the oldest of 6 children, which meant that I had to take care of the younger children, clean house, and cook most of the meals without complaining. I grew up hating my father for abandoning me, and angry with my mother for all the physical/sexual abuse that was done to me by my step-fathers. I believed that God could not love someone like me who always seemed to feel dirty, unworthy of being loved, and as a result, I hated my life.

I was 18 years old when I began to use alcohol/drugs, going in and out of jail. The court would order me to do a program, but I was unsuccessful since I did not have a relationship with God. My children suffered a great deal living with me throughout my addiction. My children were also physically and sexually abused as they grew up, repeating the pattern I knew. I am ashamed of the lifestyle that I lived in having unstable relationships, abusing alcohol and drugs and going in/out of jail. But most of all, I regret having hurt my children.

On March 7, 1990, I was arrested for the last time being under the influence of narcotics, and I was released on May 18, 1990. During my stay, upon the insistence of my friend Vicky Valdez, I began to attend the Chapel Services. I saw that Chaplains come into the pod, and Vicky encouraged me to talk to Chaplain Nancy, and Chaplain Davis. I saw the beautiful Bibles that shined like gold. At that time, the Lord put it in my heart to do Bible Studies to earn a Bible for my daughter who was about to come home from a group home in Sacramento. I wanted my daughter to know that I was truly sorry for messing up and ending up in jail when she was supposed to come home.

The Lord is so good to me because He has never left me alone to myself. My grandmother and aunt were the prayer warriors that carried me through every difficult situation until I came back to the Lord on a Palm Sunday during Easter Week. The



Lord opened my eyes as I looked around at the women in the jail just gather around Nancy Dixon, Chaplain for the women on the 6th floor every single time that she would come into the pod. I wondered how she could stand having these women around her who were stinky, dirty, and rude. I say this because that is how I felt about myself. When I went home I felt that the Lord met me there. I did not leave Him on the steps of the jail like so many times before. I meditated daily on Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord..." I would get up in the morning with the Word and attend AA Meetings. But more importantly, I went to the House of God. I love the Psalm that says, "O, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him." Psalms 34:8

I was able to connect with Nancy through one of the chapel workers Christy, who I ran into at the Bible House. I gave her my phone number, and later I received a phone call from Nancy Dixon inviting me to lunch. I want you to know that just like Jesus said, if anyone opens the door of their heart that He would come into have supper with them, so has Nancy Dixon done with me. We have been friends for approximately 13 years and 1 month. I want you to know that outside of Jesus, this is the longest friendship that has been really based on Love. This is God's Special Love which keeps me going. I was able to get custody of my son soon after my release from jail.

I give God all the Glory for what he has done in my life, taking me back to school and graduating from the Master of Social Work Program 1999. I have had the opportunity of working with Nancy Dixon doing chapel services for approximately 8 years. I had the opportunity to work with Evangel Home as House Manager at the Crisis House and also as Program Manager at the Cross Roads Program. I have been working with Tulare County Health & Human Services Mental Health Branch since 1997 to 1999 as an Alcohol & Drug Specialist, and now as a Clinical Social Worker.

I am enjoying building into my children and grandchildren's lives. There is so much that I can say about the goodness of God in my life. I have found that He is faithful to me all the time no matter what I do or how bad I can

mess it up! It is Jesus who cares for me all the time 24-7. No one can do me like Jesus.

Do you have Jesus as your Friend? If not, invite Him to be your Lord and Savior today.

Women's top health threats:

A surprising list

Do you know what threatens your life the most?

Below are the top causes of death for women in the United States, starting with the most common.

No. 1 - Heart disease

No. 2 - Cancer

No. 3 - Stroke

No. 4 - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

No. 5 - Diabetes

No. 6 - Pneumonia and Influenza

No. 7 - Alzheimer's Disease

No. 8 - Accidents

Take this opportunity to learn about the number one health concern and how you can reduce your risks. What you learn may surprise you.

No. 1 - Heart Disease

Heart disease is the most significant health concern for women in the United States today, responsible for almost 366,000 deaths each year.

What is Heart Disease?

* Coronary artery disease (Heart Disease) is atherosclerosis of the coronary arteries. Atherosclerosis is when the arteries become clogged and narrowed, restricting blood flow to the heart. Without adequate blood, the heart becomes starved of oxygen and vital nutrients it needs to work properly.

* The most common symptom of coronary artery disease is angina or "angina pectoris," also known as chest pain. Angina can be described as a discomfort, heaviness, pressure, aching, burning, fullness, squeezing or painful feeling. Sometimes, it can be mistaken for indigestion.

* More than 1 million Americans have heart attacks each year. A heart attack, or myocardial infarction (MI), is permanent damage to the heart muscle. "Myo" means muscle, "cardial" refers to the heart and "infarction" means death of tissue due to lack of blood supply.

THE GOOD NEWS - Heart disease is one of the most preventable health conditions. You have the power to reduce some of your risks as indicated below:

* **Quit Smoking** - Smokers have more than twice the risk for **heart attack** as nonsmokers and are much more likely to die if they suffer a heart attack. If you smoke, quit. Better yet, never start smoking at all.

* **Eat Healthy** - Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and grain products. Eat a heart-healthy diet low in fat and cholesterol. Try

to increase the amounts of vitamins you eat, especially antioxidants, which have been proven to lower your risk for heart disease.

* **Exercise regularly** - Many of us lead sedentary lives, exercising infrequently or not at all. People who don't exercise have higher rates of death and heart disease compared to people who perform even mild to moderate amounts of physical activity. Even, leisure-time activities like gardening or walking can lower your risk of heart disease.



* **Achieve and maintain a healthy weight** - Excess weight puts significant strain on your heart and worsens several other heart disease risk factors such as diabetes. Researchers now know that obesity itself increases heart disease risk. By eating right and exercising, you can lose weight and reduce your risk of heart disease.

* **Manage stress and anger** - Poorly controlled stress and anger can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Use stress and anger management techniques to lower your risk.

* **Control other health conditions** - High blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol put a strain on your heart.

Warning Signs - Most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

* **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

* **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

* **Shortness of breath.** This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can occur before the chest discomfort.

* **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.



REMEMBER...Your heart is an amazing organ. It continuously pumps oxygen and nutrient-rich blood throughout your body to sustain life. This fist-sized powerhouse beats (expands and contracts) 100,000 times per day, pumping five or six quarts of blood each minute, or about 2000 gallons per day.

Highlights

with Norma Mitchell



There are several things I'd like you to be aware of this month. There are some exciting things hapening in our Case Management Department. I'd like to encourage each of you to schedule a meeting, if you haven't yet, with either Susan or Liz. Here are some highlights:

February Events

- * Free HIV Testing at the Center on 2/20 from 1-4 p.m.
- * Free Employment Workshop on 2/21. See Susan or Liz for a referral.
- * Free Dental Cleaning on 2/26. Sign up by 2/19. See Liz for details.
- * Rob Day, Outreach Coordinator for Child Support will be coming to speak on possible child support arrears debts cancelled and the new laws surrounding that. He will be available to schedule private appointments.
- * Health Check - I would like to remind you that one of Samaritan Women's focuses is encouraging all of our women to receive an annual

physical exam. These annual exams are important for everyone. This year we are blessed to have an incentive for all Samaritan Women who receive a physical exam. The incentive is a \$15.00 dollar gift certificate for Target. Here is what you can do to get your FREE \$15.00 gift certificate:

1. Fill out and return a Samaritan Women Survey to Samaritan Women.
2. Have your doctor fill out the form (given out by Samaritan Women) confirming you have received a physical exam.
3. Turn in your signed copy of the confirmation from to the Samaritan Women office to receive your \$15.00 gift certificate.

* New Class - Generational Crossroads helps you understand your family and to development skills to be a better parent. (Previously called Parent's Aware.)



A Faith That Works By Pastor Brian Boone

James 4:11-12 "Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor?"

When Is It Wrong To Judge Others?

1. When I'm practicing the same sin.
2. When it blinds me to my own faults.
3. When it's based on outward appearance.
4. Before we hear the facts.
5. When it's based on externals, religious observances.
6. When it causes me to speak evil about another Christian.
7. When I judge the motives of others.

Information without application falls short of God's best for us. He wants us to apply what we learn so that we will change and grow, becoming more like Christ. The following questions are for personal and group study, with these goals in mind.

- 1) According to Romans 2:3 and Proverbs 6:22, why do we like to judge others? Give examples of how we excuse our own faults and appeal to our pride when we judge others.
- 2) Read James 4:11-12. According to James, why is being judgmental unchristian, unloving, and unjustified? At what point does calling sin what God calls sin cross the lien of playing God and having a judgmental spirit towards others?
- 3) The Bible tells us when it is wrong to judge others. Read Romans 2:1-3. Why is it wrong to judge others when I'm practicing the same sin?
- 4) What is the implication of John 7:51? Why is it wrong to judge others before we hear the facts? Share an example of how we can at times be quick to make judgments before we know the facts.
- 5) James 4:11 says that it's wrong to judge others when it causes me to speak evil about another Christian. How is it possible to "hate the sin" but "love the sinner"? Share an example of how this principle works.
- 6) According to I Corinthians 4:5, why is it premature (and wrong) to judge the motives of others?

Kid's Korner...

The Children's Enrichment Center

with Nana Singh



Get on board!!! Here at the Center most of the children make a beeline for the train table when they first come in. Constructive play is a form of therapy and we practice lots of it here. Good discipline is foundational to having a good experience of playing or learning, and does not come automatically. Living in crisis makes it very difficult to experience good discipline. Living in isolation contributes to problems; the cure is found in living in community. Time spent at the Center equips you with the skills to relate to your children in better ways.

One of our foundational principles is found posted on the doorway between rooms: **The 21 Rules of This House**. From time to time we draw attention to it. Rule # 5 states: "We speak quietly and respectfully to one another." We means everybody in the house. **ALL**



moms have to deal with what happens when yelling takes over, whether it is between siblings or from parent to child, and then back again.

Seeing the benefits of how children relax and literally become better, more socialized people, when "yelling" is banished from your life, is worth the work it takes to change habitual responses that defeat our purposes. Life rushes at us at a horrendous pace and we get caught up in the "push" of it; children resist in many ways, but will literally become 100% more cooperative as we practice this one rule. We are here to help you with this as well as other problems that just go with raising children.

Don't forget **BOOK BUDDIES** every Thursday night at 6:00 p.m. Enjoy a good book with your child; everybody wins! Practice makes perfect!



February 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship our risen Savior today.	2 ~Bible Basics, 10:30 am-Noon ~ Boundaries 1:00 - 3:00 pm ~ Personal Enrichment, 3:30 - 4:30	3 -Parenting (Court Approved), 9:30 am - 12:30 ~ Anger Resolution, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	4 ~*Bible Study/Support, 9-11 am at EV Free (child care) Boutique at Center	5 ~ Generational Crossroads, 1 - 3:30 p.m. ~ Book Buddies, 6:00-7:30 pm	6 ~Crochet & Quilting, 9:30 - Noon ~ Victory Over Substance Abuse, 1 - 2:30 p.m. ~ Incentive Party, 2:45 - 4	7
8 Take your children to worship.	9 ~Bible Basics, 10:30 am-Noon ~ Boundaries 1:00 - 3:00 pm ~ Personal Enrichment, 3:30 - 4:30	10 -Parenting (Court Approved), 9:30 am - 12:30 ~ Anger Resolution, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	11 ~*Bible Study/Support, 9-11 am at EV Free (child care) Boutique at Center ~ Rob Day, Child Support, 1-2 pm	12 ~ Generational Crossroads, 1 - 3:30 p.m. ~ Book Buddies, 6:00-7:30 pm	13 -Crochet & Quilting, 9:30 - Noon ~ Victory Over Substance Abuse, 1-2:30 ~ Incentive Party, 2:45 - 4 ~ FUN FELLOWSHIP 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	14 
15 Celebrate the Lord's Day with a group of believers!	16  President's Day Center Closed	17 -Parenting (Court Approved), 9:30 am - 12:30 ~ Anger Resolution, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	18 ~*Bible Study/Support, 9-11 am at EV Free (child care) Boutique at Center	19 ~ Generational Crossroads, 1 - 3:30 p.m. ~ Book Buddies 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	20 ~Crochet & Quilting, 9:30 - Noon ~ Victory Over Substance Abuse, 1 - 2:30 p.m. ~ HIV Testing, 1-4 pm ~ Incentive Party, 2:45 - 4	21
22 Worship your Lord and Savior at church today.	23 ~Bible Basics, 10:30 am-Noon ~ Boundaries 1:00 - 3:00 pm ~ Personal Enrichment, 3:30 - 4:30	24 -Parenting (Court Approved), 9:30 am - 12:30 ~Anger Resolution, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. ~Alumni Mtg, 6-8 pm	25 ~*Bible Study/Support, 9-11 am at EV Free (child care) Boutique at Center	26 ~ Generational Crossroads, 1 - 3:30 p.m. ~ Book Buddies 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	27 ~Crochet & Quilting, 9:30 - Noon ~ Victory Over Substance Abuse, 1 - 2:30 p.m. ~ Incentive Party, 2:45 - 4	28
29 Worship with a church family today!	Romans 5:6-8, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."					
Matthew 22:37-39, "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"						