



Marriage & Family Savers Institute

NEWSLETTER — MAY 2009

229 Robinson Ave.-Newburgh, NY 12550 – Phone (845) 561-9498 – Web: www.marriageandfamily.org

New Format –In our continuing endeavor to provide a newsletter that’s both informative and economical to produce, we’ll be trying this format for a while. This page will provide tools and encouragement to help with your marriage, while the accompanying **EMPIRE STATE FAMILY NEWS WATCH** will address the need to protect marriage from a public policy perspective. Both are essential. We need to work on our own marriages first. Then we can impact our community, our state and even our nation for the benefit of coming generations. We hope this format works for you. As usual, we’re open to feedback. Please continue to pray for this ministry. Our most pressing needs right now are for funding and a new facility. God Bless and equip you as you read.† † †

FIRST COMMUNITY MARRIAGE POLICY

We’re in the process of working out the details for the very first Community Marriage Policy in the Hudson Valley. Several pastors in the greater Montgomery area have joined together to attack the “divorce monster” as a unified force. The participating pastors will all require a minimum of four months pre-marital counseling before they marry anyone. Mentor couples will be trained and marriage events will be held in coordination throughout the township. We’ve been holding our working meetings at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce Headquarters building, so we’re believing that we will impact even the corporate community advancing the Kingdom of God as we work to save marriages and restore families together!

“From Him the whole Body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work. -Ephesians 4:16

FROM WIFE AND MOTHER TO FRIEND

-Testimony-

Things in my life just seemed overwhelming daily. I didn’t know what was wrong. Everything just felt wrong. I was feeling like I was living someone else’s life. I knew I loved God, but even my relationship with Him seemed distant. I was so disconnected. Daily, I searched my thoughts looking for a sense of who I really was. I wasn’t getting answers. Each day I began to slip away from my husband and children. My husband was seeking a closer relationship with me, and that was definitely a good thing after 18 years of marriage, but I was feeling smothered by his kindness. He kept asking me, “Carla, what is it that you need from me and the kids?” All I could answer was, “I don’t know.” All I knew was that I was tired of being a wife and a mother.

Each day brought me to a heightened state of frustration and a need to just go away from everyone. Finally, I sought counseling, As I began looking inward and uncovering my “issues” I felt conflicted. It was too hard to look inside. I didn’t always like what I saw. I really didn’t even want to seek God for His guidance to the answers I needed. It was a struggle until, finally, I surrendered my heart to God *completely*. In a sense I prayed, like the song goes, “Jesus take the wheel.”

After I cried out it seemed as if I began to glide on His power, and grace, and I could begin to address my issues –*for real!* I began to understand that my husband was not my enemy; he really was my gift from God. **Cont. P. 2**

WHY REMEMBER?

-A Message for Memorial Day-



*This is my commandment that you
love one another just as
I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this,
that one lay down
his life for his friends.”
--Jesus (John 15:12,13)*

What does Memorial Day have to do with my marriage? Lots! You see, marriage is based on a commitment to love. Those who have given their lives exemplify that love. **They gave everything** that you and I might know freedom –even their lives! We can learn from them. I spent four years in the Air Force during the Viet Nam War. We were married only eight months when I had to leave to go overseas, not to return to my new bride for 13 months. God kept me safe in Korea, but I lost friends in Viet Nam. Honoring them reminds me of the real nature of love. It’s not a feeling or having **CONT. P. 2**

MARRIAGE QUESTIONS YOU WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Below are questions that were asked, anonymously, of Bill and Penny at a recent Marriage Fellowship Dinner. We thought many of you might have the same questions so here they are:

Q. *What happens when I love my spouse but I’m not “in love” with my spouse?*

A. Jesus taught us, “Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” In other words, we must invest in the relationship, and choose to see our spouse as a gift from the hand of God. As a heart of gratitude develops the “feelings” will follow, until you are in love –*more in love*– than you’ve ever been.

Q. *I have not said “I love you” to my husband in years for fear of not hearing it back. I know we do love each other. Is there a best way beside prayer?*

A. Please understand, nothing good comes when we’re motivated by fear. Your husband may have the same fear. We must act in faith, and even risk being hurt. An old Gaither song has a line that says, “I am loved, I am loved, I can risk loving you, for the One who knows me best loves me most.” You see, it takes the assurance of

— Cont. P. 2 —

(MOTHER TO FRIEND FROM P. 1)

My children were also gifts from God. I began to believe that being a mother and a wife really was a sacred and holy calling. I guess surrendering my heart, and my will removed the scales from my eyes so that I could see the truth. My family was not out to suck the life out of me; they loved me!

As I was seeking God, and reading His word, the truth of who I was in Him became more evident. I wasn't just Craig's wife, or AJ's and Gina's mom, *I was a friend of God!* I was fearfully and wonderfully made in His image. (Psalm 139) He had a plan for me, (Jeremiah 29: 11 -13), I was forgiven of all my sins, (Isaiah 1:18) God sees me in robes of righteousness. I've been forgiven and, in fact, He even calls me *friend!* (John 15:15)

After this time of seeking God and wrestling within myself and with God, my identity in Him, and my purpose in life is slowly being revealed. God is faithful to what His word tells us. "When you seek me with **all your heart** you will find me." (Jeremiah 29:11-13). I can now have an open and honest relationship with Craig, and receive his love for me. I feel so free, and I feel so fulfilled. Maybe my circumstances haven't changed much when you look on the outside, but I know that I've found real happiness, and even joy, on the inside. That can never be taken away. I know God is not a liar and He tells me in His word, (John 15:15) "I call you friend! I feel it! And it's awesome!

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

This article was submitted by Mike & Karen Davidson, who several years ago were on the brink of divorce, but instead of throwing in the towel they chose to work through the issues that divided them. Well, today they are heading up the Marriage Ministries at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Walden, as well as serving on the board of this institute sharing with others the wisdom and grace God has granted them.

Mike and I will be married 25 years this year and there is one thing we are certain of: marriage requires work! It's like anything else in life, what you put in, is what you get out. But it doesn't have to be a chore. It can be enjoyable. That's one of the reasons we started offering The Marriage Course at our church. We do this twice a year. What is The Marriage Course? It's a nine week program of videos, live talk and interactive exercises that target the primary parts of marriage: communication, resolving conflict, prioritizing marriage, and yes, even sex. We have tweaked it so it can be a date night. A great dinner is first served by wonderful volunteers. Then we go into a room that's set up to be romantic with candles and chocolates. We even offer child care. So basically, you're getting a date night every week for nine weeks and the kicker; *it's all free!* We are blessed to have pastors at our church who believe in marriage. Our church has a marriage budget so we can offer these great events that are open to everyone. All you have to do is be married and come! Sound like fun? It is. We have been so blessed through the years watching couples come alive as they learn more about God's design for marriage and each other. Whether a couple is married six months or 50 years, everyone gets something out of it. We've had couples tell us that they came out of desperation and it was their last hope. By the end, they have found their love rekindled and the tools to work toward a God glorifying Marriage and rich fulfillment in their lives together. No marriage has to be lost. With the power of God and lots of hard work any married can be saved and restored!

Let me ask you, when was the last time you did something great for your marriage? This could be what you're looking for. If you'd like to learn more about it, you can check out our website: www.tlcinwalden.com, click on Ministry Homes and go to Marriage or you can contact us, Mike and Karen Davidson at (845) 728-0175 and we would be happy to talk with you. Our next session starts September 17, 2009. Sign up is required. Or maybe you'd like to start something like this in your church. We'd love to help. We look forward to hearing from you!+++

WHY REMEMBER Cont. from p. 1

someone in my life to meets all my needs or wants. It's giving all that I have without any guarantee, or expectation of getting anything in return.

When I enlisted some were running off to Canada because they weren't prepared to give *-to love*. Today, in the same way, many husbands and wives run off to their own places of escape to avoid giving their reasonable service because it calls for sacrifice. We need to be men and women of courage. We need to be prepared to give no matter the cost. When we look at the flag let the red stripes remind us of the blood that flowed to win our freedom, not just on the battlefields of war, but also the blood that flowed down Calvary's hill to win our freedom from sin, hell, death and the grave. We are free to love, because of those who went before us, loving us, purchasing our freedom with their lives, including, and especially, the Son of God. +++

QUESTIONS FROM P. 1

knowing that you are loved by God, so you can then risk the possibility of rejection by man, but someone has to break the stalemate. Why not you?

Q. *What do you do when your spouse won't be the spiritual leader in the home, and you're tired of doing it all?*

A. I'll assume this is a wife asking the question. Understand that inside every man is a hero waiting to come out. Appeal to the hero in him. Never speak "down" to your spouse, but rather express your need for his leadership. You know, the old damsel in distress story. You will stand a lot better chance of seeing your knight in shining armor come to the rescue.

Q. *My heart wants to have sex, but my body doesn't. What do I do?*

A. First of all, be sure you get a good physical check-up to eliminate any medical issues. Sexual responsiveness works best when you are rested and relaxed. So adjust your schedules accordingly. Remember, even God worked six days, and rested one. If God needed one seventh of His time to rest, how much more should we?

Q. *How do I get my husband to stop screaming at the TV when the Yankees are playing. This goes for football too!*

You don't. *Join him!*

If you have any questions you'd like to see answered in this column. Email them to us at info@marriageandfamily.org, and we'll do our best to answer. Don't worry, we'll keep it anonymous.++