



# Vantage Point

Life from the Vantage Point of His Grace!

May 2016

## Personal Message from Eric Johnson, M.Div.

Thank you for your investment in Jenny and me. Here are a few things that are happening:

- 100+ adults meeting weekly
- 13 relationship groups exploring and maturing in biblical faith
- Dozens of weekly contacts encountering adults for counseling, discipleship, or evangelism
- 5 volunteers are pursuing clearance to join our prison ministry

Our mission seeks to relationally extend God's grace to all adults, helping them to explore and mature in their faith. Why? Because what adults believe and how they live are intimately linked together. In two couples groups we are studying what Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount. It is perhaps the best known section of the entire Bible. It may also be the most misunderstood. The sermon underscores that Jesus stands before mankind as both Savior and Lord. It is a description of the lifestyle of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven. For example, the Beatitudes do not focus on what believers are to do rather; they describe the blessings that belong to those whose lives show the marks of being part of the kingdom of God. Jesus' teaching does not describe the ideal life in an ideal world, rather the believer's life in a fallen world. Therefore, living out the sermon must always be connected to a right relationship to Jesus.

## Gospel Message

Jesus taught, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." This can be misunderstood. Does Jesus mean that we will receive mercy only if we are merciful? Yes! But this does not mean that our being merciful in any way earns God's mercy. Rather, being merciful is the natural and expected response of one who has been the recipient of God's mercy, by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Jesus described what mercy looks like in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus asked the law expert which of the three passers-by (a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan) proved to be a neighbor to the man on the road who was attacked by robbers and left for dead. The law expert replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus illustrated mercy by the actions of the Samaritan in this parable. The man had fallen victim to others and would incur a debt he could not pay. The Samaritan took full responsibility for the man who was sinned against. He ministered to his broken, bloody, bruised body. He also did everything he could for his restoration and healing. A person extends mercy by coming alongside and doing all that he can to restore dignity to someone whose life has been broken by sin (whether his own sin or the sin of someone else).

God took human form in Jesus. He took on flesh so that sin could be taken seriously and dealt with justly once and for all and not merely overlooked. God revealed His Glory and His Goodness by proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty ...." God stoops down to extend mercy to man in his weakness and inability, bringing healing and restoration. He is the Good Samaritan coming down to us who were beaten and left for dead by our sin and the sin of others. Sin matters. "For our sake He [God] made Him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God." We didn't deserve it. He showed us mercy.

We understand that we are all undeserving. We know that we can only give away what we have been given by God. We come alongside both those who have sinned against others and those who have been sinned against. We also seek to persuade those who have received mercy to join us in extending His mercy to others.

Thank you for joining us in this ministry of mercy to adults!

**Eric Johnson, M.Div.**

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## Mission Update

*Adult Life is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit ministry relying on private support – and your generosity. Your gifts are investments in the biblical counseling, discipleship, and evangelism of people who may have little hope, and need more faith. Please consider joining us now with a monthly investment. Adult Life is now doing business as Vantage Point Ministries – Enjoying Life from the Vantage Point of God’s Grace. Use the enclosed coupon and envelope and make checks payable to “Vantage Point” or “Adult Life.”*

*Thank you! We are blessed by your friendship and support.*

*Eric Johnson, M.Div.*



## Beyond Bars

Our prison ministry has multiplied. We are not only working with men, but we are also working with the women. We teach on anger, conflict resolution, and relationships. We have 5 volunteers pursuing clearances to join us.

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## Prayer for local mission with adults...

Eric and Jenny Johnson

Extending God’s grace to all adults and helping them explore and mature in faith

Men and Women meeting in small groups will grow in grace

Our ministry to those who have left the traditional church

Eric’s doctorate work on evangelism in the church

Thankful for your partnership in this important ministry with adults

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