



VANTAGE POINT

Grace Changes Everything – March 2018

Message from Jenny and Eric Johnson, M.Div.

Our mission seeks to relationally engage all adults with God's grace. God's Word is essential to our mission as it is indeed to all of life. God has chosen His Living Word to be the way we can know Him, know ourselves, and know how to relate to others in a complex and changing world.

One area of daily life that we have found to be especially difficult and painful is reconciling relationships. Instead of pursuing Biblical peacemaking, many adults settle for peace faking: peace by truce, peace by denial, peace by avoidance, peace by indifference, and peace through separation to name a few. The fatal flaw of human wisdom is that it promises that you can change your relationships without needing to change yourself. In our human wisdom we might settle for relational détente; but God wants to bring us to the end of ourselves so that we see our greatest need is for a relationship with Him. Jesus' life, death and

resurrection brought reconciliation in two fundamental ways: (1) Jesus reconciled us to God. This in turn becomes the foundation upon which (2) He reconciles us to one another.

Jesus taught believers, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." He also taught, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." Jesus' teaching is comprehensive. He makes clear the personal responsibility, the priority and the procedure that must be used.

Jesus' teaching highlights the need for repentance. Martin Luther, the great Reformer, wrote, "When

our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Mt 4:17), He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." How is repentance reflected in reconciliation? Repentance is seen first in taking full responsibility for what you have done wrong without any excuses at all, even if the other person is 85% wrong, next in asking for forgiveness without evasion, and finally by offering to make changes and inviting the other person's suggestions. Repentance always means change.

Forgiveness is an essential part of the reconciliation process. Practicing forgiveness should and can be done regularly, and yet forgiveness is one of the most poorly practiced activities in the Christian community.

Jesus said, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Forgiveness can flow easily from believers who know that they are a sinner saved by grace; and if God held any of their sins against them, they would be lost forever.

Grace Opportunities:

- Recommend us to a friend
- Join one of our 15 groups
- Help us start another group
- Financially invest with us
- Pray for us



March 2018

Ministry 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 envelope and make checks payable to "Vantage Point" or "Adult Life." Thank you!

Thank you,

Eric

Eric Johnson, M.Div.

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 relationship groups will grow in grace.

Our ministry to the prisoners at Northampton County Prison. Thankful for your partnership in this important ministry with adults.

New groups to begin.

Contact

Facebook – AdultLifeInc and
www.adultlifeinc.org
Adult Life, Inc. – 4416
Greenfield Rd, Bethlehem, PA
18017
ericjohnsonlv@hotmail.com
484-554-9129



Wednesday Night Men and Women's Relationship Group

One Man's Faith

A few weeks ago while listening to Eric lead us in a study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7, the Lord made me realize I was doing something that was very wrong. In this passage Jesus says, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." I had been judging a Christian brother whose interpretation of the Bible is different from mine and, indeed, was putting him down verbally to other people in the community. I was convicted of my sin and confessed it to the Lord. I then called my brother to confess to him how I had been bad-mouthing him to others. I told him I had confessed it to the Lord and was now asking him to forgive me, and I promised to stop what I was doing. He forgave me and told me he appreciated my speaking to

him. He said, "You have made my day!"

Thanks for calling and being honest with me!" I felt relieved.

Peacemaker's Seven A's of Confession

Address everyone involved
Avoid if, but, and maybe
Admit specifically
Acknowledge the hurt
Accept the consequences
Alter your behavior
Ask for forgiveness

Four Promises of Forgiveness

I will not dwell on this incident
I will not bring this incident up and use it against you
I will not talk to others about this incident
I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship

The Adult Life Ministry