

Grace Changes Everything – May 2018



Message from Jenny and Eric Johnson, M.Div.

Our mission relationally engages all adults with God's grace. Our core values form the acronym BREAD and stand for Biblical, Relational, Evangelism, Adult Life, and Discipleship. These values inform everything we do. They are expressed through a variety of venues from one-on-one conversations, counseling, relationship groups, weekend retreats, and to daily activities as common as shopping at Wegmans. Over 30 years ago God called us to ministry and equipped us with advanced theological training. He gave us a love for adults and a deep desire for them to reach out and embrace the abundant life that Jesus has purposed. Here is one example that displays the symbiotic relationship of all the things we do and why your investment is so necessary and vital.

I first met Bob and Laurie when they came to me for counseling. Like many married couples they were struggling, and genuine faith was an unknown aspect in their lives. God led them to a relationship with Himself, and they began to grow in their faith. I invited them to attend our Monday night relationship group where they experienced new friends and conversations about life and faith. When God led us to multiply our Monday night group, Bob and Laurie graciously offered to host a

group on Tuesday night and began inviting their neighbors and friends.

Several months ago, Bob invited a former work colleague and his wife to join our Tuesday night group, but God had different plans. Bob's friend seemed hesitant to join us, so I suggested that Bob and I meet with his colleague for lunch instead. Bob's friend was willing to meet.

The first words out of his mouth were, "Bob wants me to come to your group because he believes it will be very different from any other group. I believe that the Bible basically teaches us how to be good people, so what's so different about your group?"

He was very guarded and skeptical. I appreciated his question and his willingness to jump into the deep issues of the faith. I began by saying, "Well, I don't think the Bible teaches us how to be good people!" We then had a two-hour lunch.

We agreed that it was premature to have Bob's colleague join our Tuesday night group because something else was needed. We decided instead to meet weekly for more conversations. Bob's friend may have felt outnumbered, so he invited another skeptical colleague to join us. For over 6 months we have now been meeting weekly in the morning for an hour and a half at Wegmans. I usually get an encouraging text from Bob, like "Another fantastic morning. Even John likes you...utterly amazing," and "Excellent job this morning!! Filled with the Spirit you showed great respect

and restraint." Bob oftentimes goes home and shares with his wife how difficult, exciting, and exhausting our conversations have been with these men. Afterwards Bob usually tells her, "I'm exhausted and I need to take a nap!" Our discussions are always focused on the Bible and arise from questions they have or have heard from others.

Some examples:

- What does the Bible teach is true about man?
- What about the inconsistencies in it?
- What differences exist between the Old and New Testaments?
- What does it teach about abortion and homosexuality?
- What is a Christian?
- What are the differences between all other religions and Christianity?
- How do you know what God wants you to do based on the Bible?

We rarely know what to expect at any given meeting, but our discussions always come back to Biblical, Relational, Evangelistic, Adult Life, and Discipleship issues. It is Bread for life!



Bob's former colleagues

Thank you for sending us to adults like these with your prayers, love, and support.

Grace Opportunities:

- Recommend us to a friend
- Join one of our 16 groups
- Help us start another group
- Financially invest with us
- Pray for us

VANTAGE POINT

May 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!

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

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Grace, Grace, and More Grace!

The Apostle Paul addresses three vital criteria for effective ministry in our discipleship and evangelism of adults. He wrote, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” I will only briefly describe them here as each aspect would be worthy of an entire newsletter. First, we must know the Gospel; second, we must be strengthened in His grace; and third, we must entrust this Gospel to others. Why?

First, I believe we live in a post-Christian world. We live in a world where most people have heard of Jesus Christ, and Christianity, but they know very little of either. Most adults do not understand the Gospel, and even some churches are moving away from the biblical foundations. Perhaps the shortest biblical summary of the Gospel is given by Paul who wrote, “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.” This is the heart of the Gospel and the foundation of our message. We teach and explain this in every venue of our ministry.

Second, believers are to be strengthened in His grace because we are tempted to rely on our own strength and more pointedly on the law. In our natural condition we believe we are capable of doing whatever we put our minds to. Paul is exhorting us to rely on, to depend upon, to cling to the grace that is available only in Jesus Christ. Grace is first and foremost God’s unmerited favor – hence its priority over our strength and knowledge. We can only know Christ because God has graciously made Him known to us and graciously given us the ability to know Him for ourselves. It is not because of any natural ability in us or because we somehow deserve it, but entirely of God’s free kindness and love. Grace also describes the supernatural strength that God provides for His children to enable them to face life’s every contingency.

Third, we must entrust this Gospel to others. I believe the Christian community has lost sight of this as it has become more program-driven and building-centered. Our faith communities do not need any more programs or buildings. God’s plan has always been people. We need to entrust others with the Gospel. They need to know the Gospel for themselves and they need to know and love people. When we rely on God’s grace and invest in others we see His grace extended into our community and the resulting changed lives of God’s renewed people.

Eric Johnson, M.Div.

The Adult Life Ministry