

The Heart Beat

July/August 2009
Vol. 3, Issue 4

a publication of Renewed Hearts, Inc.

All about you! by Gary and Tanya James

Greetings everyone! In this issue, our focus is on 'Your Story: Who Are You?' In this day and age it is very difficult to reveal to others the imperfections you possess. Often, when you tell others about your struggles, it sometimes backfires and becomes the talk of the town. This causes you to lose the ability to trust therefore causing you to mask who you really are. As difficult as it is, finding someone to pray you through your struggles can be the greatest blessing you could ever receive. It is our prayer that this issue will help you to be who you are and not worry about what others think. Be blessed!

*Love,
Gary and Tanya*

Gary and I have been through a lot together. With each challenge, we have grown closer as a couple. We got married in 1989, but we were very inexperienced in life. We did not know a lot about relationships and marriage, so we struggled, learning as we went along.

Our marriage was ordinary. We were in ministry pretty much from the beginning. We

worked diligently in the church, giving our all to the work. We had children and had them actively involved in church as well. They were in the choir, pathfinders, youth department, etc. We stayed busy.

With all of that 'working in the church', it did nothing for our marriage. You see, we were busy 'for God' being everything for everybody, but spent no time on our own relationship with each other. In 2003, after 14 years of working like this, we had come to the point of breaking up. Our marriage was soon to be over! He had had enough and so had I! We did not communicate well at all - Problem #1! Our discussions almost always turned into huge arguments. Both of us had to be right. Believe it or not, we were working in ministry while all of this foolishness was going on! God is so merciful! He covers up your mess while He is cleaning you up!

Gary was invited to speak out-of-town and we talked about the possibility of Him not returning. This may be the end of our marriage for good. While he was gone, I had a long talk with God. He showed me myself, and how much I contributed to the breakdown of our marriage. At the same time, He was showing Gary his contributions as well. We were both guilty! The next phone call was quite different than our previous calls. We talked about our issues with each other.

See 'You', continued on p.2



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It was the most difficult conversation I have ever had to go through. It is very difficult to admit that you are a mess! What a humbling experience! But, it was completely necessary. Our relationship took on new meaning and soon began to blossom. God was restoring us as well as renewing our marriage.

Soon after that our family went through a very difficult time. We lost everything, our jobs, our home, our car - everything. Looking back, I know we would not have made it through that time as a couple if God had not previously restored

our marriage. It was one of the most difficult times in all of our married life (and we have had some difficult times!)

I praise God for those tough times because out of all of that pain, God inspired us to start our ministry, Renewed Hearts, Inc. Our ministry focuses on restoring families past their pain. We have always lived by the fact that we share and teach what we have already experienced. It may get hard sometimes, but remember it is a necessary process that you may have to go through in order for your family to be restored.

Please know that no marriage is perfect or problem free. Gary and I have to make choices every day to be the kind of spouse we would like to be married to. To do this takes a commitment to each other and to the vows that we made before God.

I have a question...Is your family a reflection of your Heavenly Father? Is He pleased with the way that you relate to one another? Would He be able to use your relationship as a model to teach others? Think about it... Be blessed.



Gary and Tanya James are the Ministry Directors for Renewed Hearts, Inc.

Short Cutz..... Cheap Tricks: Saving Big!

The Negotiator

Do-it-Yourself. Negotiate rates with neighborhood tradesmen that have electrical, mechanical, and plumbing skills and want to make extra money.

Cut costs. Try living on one paycheck a month and save the other. Bundle internet packages, shop for clothes off-season, and shop at the Farmer's Market.

Cover Gaps. Put aside money into an emergency fund for expenses that may come up.

College Savings

Save up to 95% on college books at cheapesttextbooks.com.

The Coupon Queen

pennypinchingdiva.com

Shynea Hunter slashed her \$700 grocery bill by 50%. Here's how:

Go BOGO. Shop for buy-one-get-one-free items. Use two coupons and get both for free or at rock-bottom prices.

Stockpile. Most grocers operate on a 10-to-12 week sales cycle. When an item goes on sale, use a matching coupon to buy enough to last for 12 weeks. Track the best deals at thegrocerygame.com.

Pick-up a lot of newspapers. Hunter buys six Sunday papers, which pay for themselves. Stack the store coupon with the manufacturing coupon for extra savings. She also joins programs like CVS's ExtraCare Extra

Bucks. She gets \$10 cash back weekly and never pays for shampoo, toothpaste or deodorant.

Savings

"I have a no-buy month -I don't get my hair or nails done, no dinners out; I don't even wash my car. I save \$400.

Save Big on Eyeglasses

Get free eyeglasses for kids with the purchase of adult eyeglasses at foreyes.com

Low-income children can get free exams and glasses from sightforstudents.org

This information is reprinted from Essence Magazine, August 2009.



My Friend Lynn, by Karla Bliss



That Lynn, I thought I knew her so well. I'd known this woman since childhood, spent a considerable amount of time with her, and watched her grow up, go to college, get her first job, and get married. I was even there when she had her children. I thought she was a pretty nice girl....quiet, sort of introverted, sometimes a loner, but a deep thinker and a contemplative observer. She never got into much trouble and for the most part she stayed true to family values. So you will understand why I was so shocked to find out who she really was.

I first started noticing some heart issues about four years ago. One day someone came back into her life, someone she hadn't really spent a lot of time around, her mother-in-law. And God used her mother-in-law's arrival to show Lynn that she had some unforgiveness in her heart. To my utter surprise, Lynn didn't even notice her impatience with her husband's mom, her short, curt answers, but others on the outside did. It didn't take long for Lynn to take the situation to God and sure enough, her family and friends were right. She asked God to reveal the truth and He did. Jeremiah 17:9 says "The

heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (KJV) Lynn didn't know her heart.

Then God started revealing to Lynn that maybe, she wasn't as strong as she hoped she was. God had to painfully take her through a stripping process to help her realize that sometimes she depended more on the



opinions of others, more on what she read, more on herself than on God. What better way to teach her these lessons than through loss. So one by one Lynn began to experience loss through death, strained relationships and friends moving away. But Lynn is a little stubborn and a little head strong so it took even longer for her to remove herself out of the way so she could lean on the arms of God. (Pray, God is still working on her with this.)

Then I found out that the person I thought I knew...yes, Lynn, had some trust issues going on, of all things. She had unfortunately allowed things that people said, things that people did, to affect not only her relationships with

others, but her relationship with God. So, once again God had to place her in trying circumstances so her faith and trust could grow. God even allowed her family to go without any income for months in order to build trust.

There's so much more I could say about Lynn. She's been through a lot, but she's better off with God in control of her character and life. I should know, I am Lynn. Yes, Karla Lynette Phipps Bliss. I've learned that just as God uses circumstances and trials to help us grow, he uses friendships to cultivate and refine our characters, teach us lessons and show us our true selves. Growth occurs when we allow relationships to mold us, strip us, expose us, and then change us.

I'm under construction, and I'm learning that God uses the nice words that are spoken and the good times in life to produce our characters, but many times he uses the sad times, the heartaches, the soured relationships, the financial problems, the seemingly unanswered prayers and the valley's to produce men and women of valor, hope, courage and promise.



Victory Through Prayer and Praise, by Marsha Peters

"Pray without ceasing."
1 Thessalonians 5:17. I've heard this text all my life

but never understood it fully until a couple of years ago. God wants us to keep a prayer in our hearts and be able to turn to Him at any moment. If ever

I thought we were living in the last days of earth's history, I think so even more now. If you haven't noticed, the devil is stepping up his game. I don't believe he will get most Christians with outward sins; that's too obvious and very easy to avoid. I believe he will get them through "mind games"; sins, depression or distress of the mind - the things which earthly eyes may not see.

Most times when there are things going on in your mind, no one knows or can tell, so it is easy to hide. You can go on for days, months or even years and appear normal and whole on the outside, but be a total mess on the inside. Hidden sin, depression or distress is hard to confess or admit to especially if you have worn a façade to prove to everyone that you are fine. It is kept secret and not dealt with, and the devil wins. Mind games distract you from Jesus; the "Mind Regulator", and that's exactly where Satan wants you. He wants you to focus so much on your sin or problem that you begin to believe that there is no hope for you. This undercuts



your faith in Jesus, and makes you turn inward for answers, which only drives you deeper into hopelessness because there are no answers within. The answers are in Jesus. The hope is in Jesus. The victory over that besetting sin or distress is in Jesus.

We must combat the devil through prayer and praise. I hear a lot at church that you need to rejoice in the difficulty, "encourage yourself in the Lord", and "praise Him in advance," all of which are Biblical (Matthew 5:11-12, 1 Samuel 30:6, Psalms 42:5), but sometimes in the heat of battle it's hard to remember, but when you do, it works! I am a living testament to that fact.

A few months ago I found myself in a desperate situation. I didn't stop praying, but I was doing all I could to solve the problem and nothing was working. There seemed to be no way out. I was beginning to despair and think that there was no hope when a thought popped into my head, "Why don't you praise Him even if you don't see the answer, and thank Him in advance for what He will do." I had tried everything else so I figured this couldn't hurt, and that's exactly what I did. That same day my problem was solved, from out of no where

and from a direction I hadn't even thought to go in. The devil tried to discourage and depress me, but God delivered me through prayer and praise. I resolved that day, never again to worry about any thing because it only brings unnecessary stress. Why should I stress out when I have Jesus?

Inspiration

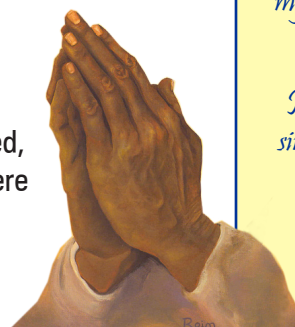
"Always"

You know I've had some lonely days. I've made mistakes and had to pay. I've had some friends that walked away just like mama told me. But there's someone whose love is real. Who cares about the way I feel. Every pain and erased every stain. There's peace when I call out your name

Jesus, You're my everything. The cross, You did that just for me. So whatever You take me through, I promise you, I'll spend my always with you

No one can touch my heart like You or make me smile the way You do. I finally found someone who really, truly loves me. And when my strength has come and gone, Your life in me it makes me strong. Your hand is where my heart belongs. You take all my pain and erased every stain

Jesus, my whole life has changed since that day I cried Your name. For every time You've brought me through, I promise You I'll spend my always with You



Procrastination: The Thief of Time, by Derek Peters

I grew up on a tiny island in the South Atlantic Ocean. After finishing high school and vocational/technical school, I moved to a neighboring island to work for an international telecommunications company – Cable & Wireless PLC.

Having been raised in a Christian home I was excited to be out on my own – pursuing my own course. I was anxious to further my education and become a telecommunications technician, especially since Cable & Wireless had its own college in England. As an added bonus, I could take their correspondence courses free of charge, and I hoped to be sent to the college by the company after a few years.

I started out zealously, being very studious the first couple of months, but things soon started to fall apart. Ascension Island had great weather, great beaches, and plenty of bars. There was always a party going on. Having already acquired a taste for beer and Bacardi Rum, I soon found myself sucked into a cycle of work, parties, tennis, and hanging out at the beach. I felt I was living a life of great personal freedom. Very soon my books were gathering dust.

Mentally I reminded myself about



my career goals but always procrastinated, promising myself that I would reform and take up studying again. I seldom did any on a consistent basis. The years slipped quickly by with just three technical certificates gained; and after nine years I immigrated to the United States.

Today I am married with a family and employed as a service technician in a job that gives me little satisfaction – it just pays the bills. Regretfully I have looked back over those wasted early years in disbelief, recognizing that procrastination, my mental immaturity, and the consequent lowering of my Christian values has cost me dearly.

This story does have a good ending though. I went back to school in 2007 and will soon graduate in a field that I enjoy, and one that will also increase my earnings potential.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.” This is a stark warning to all of us: procrastination in secular things and its consequences can sometimes be rectified; procrastination about a total personal surrender to God can mean eternal death.

Don’t let the “Thief of Time” steal away that which matters most – a vibrant personal relationship and eternal life with God.

My Story

by Marvin & Carvin Winans

I’m just trying to tell my story, not for fame or vain glory. Just trying to let you know what I’ve been through. Not seeking worldly treasures, To bust a rhyme or just be clever. Just thought I’d let you know what I’ve been through.

Even though you know the way. All your life you heard him say, “Boy don’t ever turn away from what is right.” Comes a certain time in life when you just don’t want to fight. So you exercise your right to let it go.

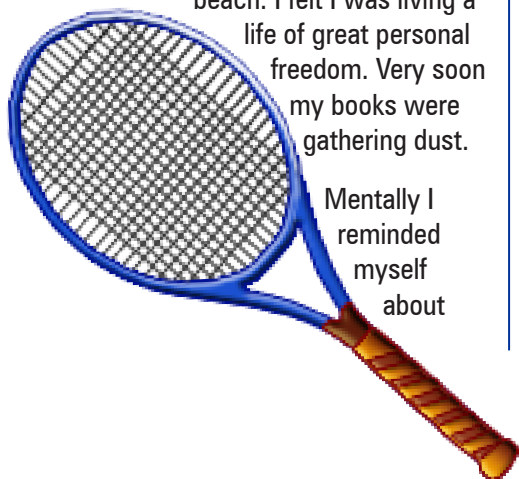
I’m in a mess. I need a way out. Can you help me find the peace of mind I used to have? I’m just a wreck left like a plane crash. There seems to be a piece of my mind everywhere.

Got fame and took a walk. To a land I never thought I’d ever be. Now I sit upon this fence taking in this recompense for the lack of common sense. Oh hear my plea!

Never been this way before. You know I did what was in store and I just can’t take no more. Please come see about me. And I know, time is spent to let it go. You’re the only help I know. Help me!

Though I walk this lonely road, back home is where I gotta go. If I can make it there I know that all is right. Deserving how I’ll be received, but a servants job is enough for me. Bottom line I gotta be but I am free.

Here comes my help! Here comes my way out! And now I’ll find the peace of mind I knew before. He is my help! He is my way out! Happy days are here to stay forevermore!



Everlasting Love, part 2 by Melissa Kemp-Lewis

While in college, I lost my virginity and soon found out that I was pregnant. This secret distracted me. My grades weren't great and by the end of that semester I was on probation. I decided, along with the father, to save face and abort our unborn baby at 14 weeks. Hypocrite! Things were all wrong and I was unable to recover from these things that were happening in my life, so I thought. The anger was getting stronger and I was angry with myself. By the end of the school year I was dismissed from college and no one knew all of my secrets, just God and me. Things were the same as I left them at home with my mom. Once again she found some reason to be angry with me and she put me out, told me to go live with my grandmother.

I needed to fix this mess. I went to the local community college and registered for school. But Hurricane Andrew came through leaving me and my grandmother homeless. My FEMA check was stolen and I was sleeping wherever someone would let me stay in their home. Some were friends, some were strangers. My mom refused to sign my financial aide papers so I couldn't get money for school. I joined the United States Air Force at 20 years old. I soon met a young man and eventually married him.

My marriage seemed to be going well. We left NJ and were now stationed at Yokota Air Base (Tokyo) Japan. Due to not being to find work on post my husband decided he wanted to leave and go back to the United States to finish school

in Arizona, against my wishes. This was the beginning of a failed marriage due to separation and infidelity. He returned to Japan after much begging and pleading from me and we conceived. There were challenges of rumors and outsiders in our marriage so I decided to separate from the Air Force and return back to my husbands' hometown of Wilmington, DE. One day he left for work on a Friday and did not return for 3 months. What was I supposed to do - a stay at home mom with a nursing baby, no car, no job, no money, no food, an eviction notice on the door and too embarrassed to tell anyone.

I called my mother-in-law and she revealed to me that he was married when I married my husband. I saw five years of my marriage flash before my eyes and I hung up the phone. I called the number on the back of my insurance card and told the voice on the other end that I wanted to end my life. After some consideration of what I would be leaving my son to deal with, I reconsidered and assured the lady on the phone I would not bring harm to myself.

I found a job. I got back on my feet and then he came back wanting to be with his "family". I didn't want that with him anymore but I let him come back home. We moved to Nashville, TN after signing a contract in June 2002 to join the military once again only this time the United States

Army Reserve. I started attending church again. I was not happy in my marriage and I prayed asked God to help me with my decision. After counseling with the Pastor, I opted for a divorce.

I moved to West Virginia and a few years later I remarried. This man was verbally and physically abusive. After a few years, my second marriage was a failure due to infidelity and abuse; I was divorced a year later. I had problems paying my bills, got evicted and moved in with a guy I became friends with. We had many problems and eventually, my son had to go live with his dad for a short while.

In spite of everything, where there was grief there was always hope. At times I remembered God, when I was alone it helped me to sleep to know He was looking on, the peace that I dreamed of was the same everlasting love. I believed what He said is true... that He would never ever leave me or forsake me. So I kept reaching out as far as I could, knowing He would take hold of my hand. Yesterday and today, forever more, it will remain, even now, it's still

the same, because His love, stayed with me. What my heart feels is what I write of the same everlasting love



Please pray for this upcoming event!

Smoke Signals

Married Couples Retreat

September 18 - 20, 2009

at the lovely
Lodge at Simpsonwood
in Norcross, Georgia

Marriage should be beautiful!
Blow out the **'SMOKE'** before
it turns into a **'FIRE'!**

Retreat Presenters
Gary and Tanya James
of Renewed Hearts, Inc.

Based on
Fireproof the Movie
and the Love Dare
with a **'Twist'**

Learn how to put
'Spice' back in your life
and maintain a happy,
healthy marriage!



For more information or to register, call 678-910-7852 or visit www.renewedheartsinc.org

Quote of the Month

*"A life
without
cause is a
life without
effect."*

Barbarella

Prayer Requests

Please pray for this ministry. Renewed Hearts, Inc. is a 501(c)3 God-supported, non-profit organization. If you have a request, email us at: prayers@renewedheartsinc.org.

Please pray for the following families:
(Initials are used for confidentiality reasons)

- DB - This young man has a heart problem
- W Family - Loss of their mother
- FS - Marital Problems

- SG - Missionary in Korea

Also, please pray for:

- Smoke Signals Marriage Retreat
- Those still seeking employment
- Our families and troubled marriages
- Our Churches and Pastors
- Those who don't know God
- A grant writer - to help raise funds in order to provide needed services.
- A facility for this ministry

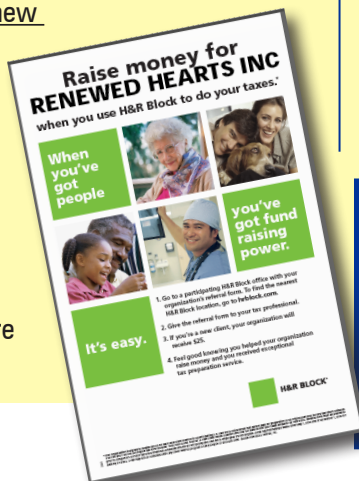
Please Support Us

Renewed Hearts, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We operate primarily on the funds from those whom God has divinely inspired to bless this ministry. We are not seeking riches or fame, for it is our desire to be used for the service of God giving all glory and honor to Him. We never want it to be said that we could not help someone, provide a service or minister in a church because of finances. Therefore, we believe, by faith, that God will supply all of our needs.

For these reasons we DO NOT charge any fees for this ministry. If you are so moved, we have several ways that you can support this ministry:

1. Use H&R Block to do your taxes.

You must be a new client. H&R Block will donate \$25 to our non-profit organization. (You must use our referral form. See our website for more information).



2. Become

a member of **S&K Gives Back**. Every purchase you make at any S&K Menswear location provides a donation of 5% of your purchase amount to a charity of your choice. Visit www.skgivesback.com/join.cfm, select Charitable organization and type in Renewed Hearts.

3. SunTrust 'Our checking, Your cause' Program.

Open a free, **NO FEE** personal or business checking account and SunTrust will donate \$100 of **THEIR** money in your name to our ministry. Visit www.suntrust.com/mycause or call 866-266-2802.

4. You may make a personal donation. Please visit www.renewedheartsinc.org and click on donate or mail to: Renewed Hearts, Inc. P.O. Box 5474, Atlanta, GA 31107. All donations are tax-deductible.

Thank you for your support of this ministry.

*Life is simple,
it's just not easy.*

Author Unknown

Support

Check out our website!

www.renewedheartsinc.org

If you would like to subscribe to The Heartbeat, please visit our website and click on **Happenings**. Thank you

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. If you would like to support us, please visit our website and click on **Donate** or you may send donations to the following address:

Renewed Hearts, Inc.
P.O. Box 5474 Atlanta, GA 31107

All donations are tax-deductible!

Thank you for your prayers and support of this ministry.

If you would like to submit an article, a poem, or share a testimony, email:

heartbeat@renewedheartsinc.org

All articles are subject to editing and may not be included in the current issue. However, it may be included in a later issue.

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