



SUNSET

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PULSE

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Youth Winter Retreat

Article By: Jonathan Lee. Photos By: Jonathan Lee and Clark Fobes

On January 12-15, 2018, Sunset held its annual Youth Winter Retreat. Taking place at Redwood Christian Alliance, the retreat was an opportunity for students to step away from their normal lives, and refocus their hearts and their minds on God. Surrounded by friends, Cup of Noodles, and God's beautiful creation, numerous students described the weekend as a time of nearness to Christ and tremendous growth in their faith.

God blessed retreat even before it started. With attendance higher than ever, small groups swelled to fourteen members- a challenge for close discussion times. Yet God faithfully provided a number of temporary small group leaders! Their aid gave the overloaded counselors some much-needed time to retreat themselves, one counselor shared.

Another great blessing was "church time," a special activity that allows students to experience the Gospel in a tangible way. This year, students navigated a maze of chairs blindfolded, while hearing the voices of the guilts, fears, and doubts they face in their own lives. At the end, their blindfolds were removed and students found themselves facing the cross. This was to represent how we are blind because of sin, but Christ gives us sight by paying our ransom with His own life. Then, students wrote their sins down on the blindfolds and laid them at the foot of the cross, representing how we confess our sins to God and trust completely in His saving work.

In addition to enjoying time with God, students also had lots of fun bonding with one another. From hikes in the forest to organized games with hilarious "funishments" to the first ever counselors vs. kids flag football game, students had a blast starting new friendships and building up old ones. Many small groups grew from friends to true brothers and sisters, as they learned to lift each other's burdens and truly love one another.

Every year, one of the highlights of retreat is Megapraise, an extended time of prayer and praise. Students gathered to pray over each other and praise God for all He's done in them. Perhaps the most beautiful time is when students come



over to someone they've never met before and pray for each others' struggles. What an amazing demonstration of their unity in Christ!

After coming home, students returned to Friday fellowship to share takeaways from retreat. One high schooler described how he'd fallen away two years ago. Yet through retreat, God brought him back to church and revived his faith! Other students also felt renewed love and desire for God. Members of the senior class, reflecting on their final retreat, shared, "Retreat helped me learn about how I have been raised up in Christ," and "I not only gained a deeper realization of the Gospel for myself, but also a greater desire to honor and worship God wherever He calls me to go." Praise God for all He did through retreat! ■



New Members At Sunset!



Jennifer Sparks



Surrine Leung

Relational Wisdom Seminar With Founder, Ken Sande

Article By: Elgin Quan 关李瑶真. Photos By: Richard Lee



A thoroughly entertaining, enlightening and encouraging weekend was spent with Ken Sande, founder of Peacemaker Ministries and Relational Wisdom 360. Using a wide variety of movie clips and simple to remember acrostics, Ken brought to an audience of 160+, powerful and fun loving lessons on how to get a “better kind of smart”, – lessons on not only to reconcile but prevent upstream conflict.

- Why do some people seem to make friends easily and have enduring friendships and marriages?
- Why do they perform so well in the workplace and advance their careers?
- How do they maintain close influential connection with their children and relatives?

What makes the difference?

Ken Sande is a Relational Wisdom expert. Unlike IQ or EQ, RW is more challenging to acquire because it takes discernment, (wisdom) which is inherently a gift, not necessarily inborn. With Ken’s background in engineering and law, the author was able to effectively communicate clear and open pathways to better understand and apply relational wisdom techniques.

Ken Sande founded Relational Wisdom based on the biblical principal that God is highly relational, and has created every person on earth to be made in the image of God. Since we are designed by God, therefore, we are called to be highly relational as well. Because God created us for Relationship, to the measure of your ability to love God with all your heart and to love our neighbor as yourself, is the measure you are fulfilling the 2 great commandments. Matt 22:37-39 & John 13:34-35.

In technical terms, Relational Wisdom by Ken Sande is defined as the *ability to discern emotions, interests, and abilities in yourself and others, to interpret them in the light of God’s Word and to use these insights to manage your response and relationships constructively.* Page 4 RW Study Guide. ▶



Human emotional barriers to relational wisdom.



Beginning with our “OS” or relational operating system, Sande powerfully uses 5 ways to weave RW into everyday personal and professional relationships. I especially liked his creative use of numerous clips from movies supported by over 300 bible quotes. Because I was pleasantly entertained, it became easier to visualize the connection between the problem and the solution. The complex became clear and manageable.

Five Principles

1. **SOG** plan

- Self aware - how am I feeling and acting?
- Other aware – How are others feeling? How am I affecting them?
- God aware - What is God up to?

2. Follow a trustworthy **GPS** (God Positioning System)

- Glorify God (Trust Him Absolutely)
- Pursue God (Seek Him earnestly)
- Serve God (Do what pleases Him)

3. **READ** yourself accurately

- Recognize your emotions
- Evaluate their source
- Anticipate the consequences of following them
- Direct them on a constructive course

4. **SERVE** every person you meet

- Smile (home, church, store, telephone)
- Explore and empathize (show interest and compassion)
- Reconcile (be a peacemaker)
- Value (express appreciation and admiration)
- Encourage

5. Practice the **PAUSE** principle

- Prepare (pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options)
- Affirm relationships (show genuine concern and respect for others)
- Understand interests (identity others’ concerns, desire, needs, limitations or fears)
- Search for creative solutions (prayerful brainstorming)
- Evaluate options objectively and reasonably (evaluate, don’t argue)



Joy Luck Club “I see you”. SOG, READ, & PAUSE principles.

Because godly wisdom goes against our natural bent, it takes a lot of determination and effort to change habits and be-setting sins. Yet all people desire relationship. Some people do it well. Others not so well. Few master it.

As an evaluation in (SOG) self, other and Godly awareness RW asks: to what degree are you willing to improve your ability to develop authentic, enjoyable productive and lasting relationships? How motivated are you to resolve conflict and restore broken relationships for the glory of God? Your answers will ultimately determine your degree of relational wisdom and your response to being entrusted with 2 great commandments: Matt. 22:37, John 13:34-35. ■

Comments and feedback: ejquan02@gmail.com



梁潔瓊博士的詩篇講座

Article By: Pastor Simon Cheng. Photos By: Teresa Cheng

2月8日至9日，洛杉磯北美中華福音神學院院長梁潔瓊博士舉辦了一場關於詩篇的講座，中文部有70多人出席了會議。講座不但為詩篇提供了歷史和文學背景，但更側重於詩人的情緒以及他們如何向上帝表達自己的情感。與機器或機器人不同，人類的情緒與他們的內心和外在環境有關。無論是積極或消極的情緒，都可以對我們的身體、行為以及我們如何與上帝和其他人相處有重大的影響。梁博士表示，我們的處境會影響我們的情緒，而我們常常無法控制自己周邊的情況。但是，我們可以選擇自己的思維方式、態度和對情緒的處理，這使我們避免被自己的情緒所劫持。



神賜給我們詩篇作為一個“天窗”來接近祂的恩典寶座，以便我們在有需要的時候透過祂的仁慈和恩典來幫助我們（希伯來書4:14-16）。據梁博士的理解，上帝這樣對我們說：“睡不著？和我說話！”她講解了四個步驟來理解詩篇：(1) 研讀詩篇的內容，包括詩人的思想和情感，以及對神的敬畏；(2) 使用詩人的話語；(3) 進入詩人的“天窗”，向神表達自己的情感；(4) 退出我們自己的情緒。梁博士詳細介紹了詩篇第6、10、126和149章，教我們如何處理和表達一些人的情緒。這次講座深受許多兄弟姐妹的歡迎，有興趣觀看講座的弟兄姊妹，可以在以下網頁中找到錄製的視頻和講義

Psalm Workshop

Article By: Pastor Simon Cheng. Photos By: Teresa Cheng

On February 8-9, Dr. Kathryn Leung (President of China Evangelical Seminary North America, Los Angeles) presented a workshop on Psalms, with an attendance of more than 70 people from the Cantonese congregation. While the workshop provided a historical and literary background for the book of Psalms, it focused mainly on the emotions of the psalmists and how they expressed their emotions to God. Unlike a machine or robot, humans have emotions that link to their internal and external worlds.



Our emotions, positive or negative, can have a significant impact on our physical bodies, what we do, and how we relate to God and other people. Dr. Leung indicates that our circumstances, with which we frequently have little control, often affect our emotions. However, we can choose how we think, our attitudes and actions towards them. This will allow us to avoid being hijacked by our emotions.

God provides us with Psalms as a “skylight” to approach His throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:14-16). According to Dr. Leung, God is saying, “Can’t sleep? Talk to Me!” She teaches four steps to understand the psalms: (1) Exegesis the content of the psalms, including the psalmist’s thinking and emotions and his awe of God; (2) uses the language of the psalmists; (3) enter the “skylight” of the psalmists to express our emotions to God; and (4) exit our own emotions. Dr. Leung walked through Psalms 6, 10, 126 and 149 in details to illustrate how we can process and express some of the human’s emotions.

The workshop was well received by many brothers and sisters. ■

Thailand STM Trip

Article By: Jason Homan. Photos By: Jason Homan and Matthew Chung



The sole purpose of missions is to proclaim the glory of His name and therefore would compel His chosen people to worship Him. Missions only exist because the worship of His glorious name does not exist amongst His people.

On February 9, 2018, Sunset church sent off two young men (even though I wouldn't consider myself completely young... but I am youthful at heart!) for a 1.5week short-term mission trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand. This is the first-time Sunset church is sending any of its members to Thailand as part of its annual Short-Term Missions project. In Chiang Mai (Northern Thailand), is a gathering of various Christar missionaries during their time of retreat, rest, and worship amidst their hectic lives as missionaries throughout East Asia. The young men who were sent included Matthew Jordan Chung (Sunset church's worship leader) and Jason Homan (me). Their task was to encourage and bless the missionaries of Christar East Asia by ministering to some of their teenage children. Matt would also provide leadership in the form of musical worship every morning to the missionaries during the start of each day in Thailand (and one session on a Friday night).

If you are not familiar with Christar, as a church, we support several of its missionaries in East Asia. These humble servants include An C (a former member of Sunset Church), Av C, and Fe C with their three beautiful children (whom first request of us to send Matt and myself in the first place).

While in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Matt and I were able to directly and spiritually minister to 5 teenage girls and 2 teenage/ young adult boys. All these youths were missionary kids, all born in the mission fields. Many grew up with different views and cultures from our own in the States. The week includes daily devotions and discussion in the topics of Kingdom/Heaven Minded Perspective. "How do we keep a keen eye on the glory of Christ and constant worship of His name in our lives amidst living in this spiritually dark world?" That was the question that was asked on a daily basis. Overall the youths benefitted from our brief yet fruitful relationship that we developed during the week of this trip. Spiritual growths by His grace definitely bloomed amongst the youths during this trip! Praise God!



God is truly gracious in providing me a ministry partner in Matthew, as he planned all our extracurricular activities for our group! This includes riding on elephants, watching elephants play soccer and paint beautiful intricate paintings, visiting a factory that makes recyclable paper products from elephant feces, playing with baby Bengal tigers, hedgehogs, visiting ►



night markets, and a scavenger hunt. The food in Chiang Mai was inexplicably explosive in its flavors and spice (to say the least)! God has blessed me with the spiritual gift of shepherding and teaching, but without Matt, there would not be any of the exciting fun activities that we all got to enjoy! Praise God for Matt!

Perhaps the most unexpected, yet blessed part of this trip, was being able to commune, converse, worship with, and listen to the experiences of all of the attending missionaries at this conference. We truly felt the true love that all these missionaries had for our Lord and Savior! They never once considered their jobs as missionaries a sacrifice of any sort. In fact, many continued to retain the occupation/careers they had in the States. Av C, for example, once worked for Apple Inc. He continues his job as programmer and consultant in East Asia, and even starting his own company. All the while, he evangelizes and ministers to the local people he works with. The key is that missionaries, like Av C, was so in love with our Lord and Savior that he would completely surrender his family and himself as an act of worship to be used by God in every aspect of their lives in order that worship of His name be known throughout the unreached nations! Matt and I felt this passion and love for the Lamb of God, and we are so humbled and encouraged by their love and obedience.

We came to bless, but in the end, we were more blessed! Because of this trip, personally I now have two more spiritual accountability partners (of whom I will continue to keep in touch with) and 7 more younger spiritual brothers/sisters in Christ, that we will keep in touch, in the teenagers that we served. God is truly there with all of us! This trip was a tremendous blessing for Matt and me, and I bring great news and blessings to Sunset Church from our missionary brothers and sisters of Christar!

Church, I hope that you were encouraged and blessed by this news of what He is doing abroad and what He is about to do with Sunset Church through short term missions trip like this in the future. ■



地震預備講座

作者: 伍葵祝

多謝你和Suzanne Mak 組織這個地震安存外展計劃,和地震後的恢復工作 這兩堂課使我得益不少。

家居防火檢查清單非常有用又清楚. 幫助我們如何應付緊急情況和減輕恐懼. 如果你家中發生火災. 離開火場, 留在外面, 並打電話求救. 你家的每一層安裝煙霧報警器, 並包括睡房內外. 每個月測試他們並每年最少一次更換電池. 每年兩次與家人討論火災逃生計劃和進行實習. 家居地震加固工程: 用灰泥或魔術膠加固易碎物品. 使用兩條家具尼龍帶來固定大型家具. 將易燃燒和危險物品放在儲物櫃下層, 妥為存放以避免溢漏或互相混合. 等等

地震反應及地震後的恢復工作:

災難協助提供機構:

1. 救世軍紅十字會
2. 慈濟基金會
3. 宗教組織



災難發生後: 檢查自己是否受傷. 修復財產損失. 聯繫你的房東和保險公司. 安排你的財產和所有的物. 保護重要文件和更換聯繫方式. 災難發生後, 照顧好你的情緒健康. 足夠的休息和喝充足的水.

又學到很多急救的知識和方法: 如CPR, CHOKING, BLEEDING. 我覺得這兩天的課程對我. 學到很多對地震的知識.

Earthquake Preparedness Workshop

Article By: Chris Tan (Co-lead of Sunset's Emergency Medical Team). Photos By: Suzanne Mak and Lucy Gee

Question: What do you get when you place a wet towel over a hair dryer that is off but still plugged in and still hot.
Answer: A fire that will burn down the room in about 2 minutes.

Question: What do you do when you are sleeping in bed and an earthquake occurs?
Answer: Stay in bed and pull the covers over your head until the shaking stops.

Sunset's Medical Emergency Team (MET) had the opportunity to host two days of Earthquake Preparedness workshops led by Self Help for the Elderly on Feb 10th and 24th. There was a Cantonese workshop attended by over 50 people and an English workshop attended by about 25 people. The first day workshop only lasted an hour long and the second workshop was two hours long. The workshops covered fire safety, personal preparedness, response and recovery, earthquake mitigation, basic first aid and hands-on CPR. We watched several videos on fire safety and learned how to use the fire extinguisher. It was quite scary to see a video on how a fire can start and travel very fast. I still remember the quote "the flame will follow wherever the smoke goes". In a room that is filled with smoke, get down to your knees and crawl out. In regard to preparing for any disaster, it is important to have an emergency bag. Make sure to have small dollar bills. You won't want to pay for a can of food or water bottle with a \$20 bill because you will probably not get any change in return. Also make sure to have a printed copy of your ID, insurance and a contact number outside of the disaster area where your family can all call to report.



Attendees practiced first aid skills to bandage up a wound.

There was ample information to absorb and overall, the workshops were well received. For attending both workshops, the attendees received an emergency kit and a certificate of completion. It was very generous of them to present such a kit since it contained many essential items such as 4-in-1 radio, water supplies, food rations, blanket, light stick, masks, poncho, first aid kit, etc.

It was a time well spent and I hope they will come back again to bigger audiences in the future. ■

I Keep Hearing About It, but What Are “Shared Tables”?

Article By: Melody Gawliu. Photos By: Shared Table Hosts

How can I meet other people and get to know them passed just a hello? Does it have to be awkward to get to know someone whom I've never really talked to but have seen on Sundays for years? How can I decide who to mentor (or be mentored by) if I don't know anyone? These are just a few of the questions I've heard that God has used to convict my heart. One of the things God has put on my heart is to create spaces for people to gather in community.

Shared Tables is one of the ideas the *Connections Ministry* had in order to give people an opportunity to connect in a more “intimate” setting in a less “intimidating” way. When you come to a Shared Table, you know that everyone who is there is **looking to get to know you** and have you get to know them! When we gather for a meal in a relaxed atmosphere, we are able to let our guards down. In this space, there are so many possibilities of what God can do because each table is different since there isn't a particular agenda for the time together other than creating a place for community. Different things we have seen are groups getting to know each other, finding out how to support and pray for one another, newcomers feeling more welcomed, regular members digging deeper and getting more rooted in community. OH and did we mention *there's food?!*

Above all, we want to encourage ourselves to look forward to being a community seen in Acts 2:42-47:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47 paints a beautiful picture of the community we should strive for and desire to be a part of. If you are already eager to be a part of this type of community OR want to see if God will press upon your heart this desire, **join us for Shared Tables!** We had our first round of Shared Tables at the end of January and beginning of February and sign-ups for our next round have already opened on the Connections Info Board in the church lobby and online: sunsetchurchsf.org/sharedtables. We pray that you'll join us in “sharing tables, sharing lives, and sharing Christ.” ■



Shared tables was a great way to start meaningful relationships with members of Sunset that I don't know well or see regularly. It was very encouraging to hear other members' testimonies, gifts, and struggles. I left feeling very full of joy, after experiencing everyone's commitment to listening and sharing and having the opportunity to pray for one another.

— Jennifer Sparks

Are you looking to find community at Sunset? Shared Tables is a step in the right direction! It's grade triple F! What's that you ask? Food, Fellowship, and Fun! — Pablo Loo

Don't miss this great opportunity to meet and get to know other people that you might not have the opportunity to meet in a large church. You will be blessed and encouraged by the sweet fellowship! — Lucy Gee

Really enjoyed Shared Tables and getting to know folks that I wouldn't normally have the chance to connect with. Overall it was an awesome and fun experience :) - Yihan Wang

Shared table is an experience that you can have outside of the church. Church service is full of people, but you can barely connect with any strangers.

Only in a small group shared table event where you can meet others and share something deeper. — Esther Chen

Shared tables was such an awesome experience because we were able to have great conversations with the people in our church! — Terra Vo

Shared Tables was a great opportunity to meet others in the church (that you might not normally meet) and get to know them in a very relaxed setting. If you are able to go, be ready to be blessed!!! — Kimberly Tam

Small Groups Big Impact - Book review

Article By: Elgin Quan 关李瑶真.



In a recent Chinese Ministry Team meeting, (CMT) the book *Small Groups Big Impact* by Jim Egli and Dwight Marable was resourced as a basis for correlating the health of small groups.

So what's the big deal about small groups? What is the big impact it presupposes?

After extensive survey of over 3,000 group leaders from 200 churches, the authors concluded it was **not** education, age, personality,

or spending more time in lesson preparation, but the measure of the health and growth of a small group corresponded directly to the spiritual health of the individual.

When the authors asked why some small groups thrive while others struggle and fail they discovered the believers' spiritual life, was the source of a small group success. That the practice of prayer the supply line to God's Spirit, determined how big the impact to small groups.

It took Jesus' work with His 12 disciples that we see tremendous life change. What changed them? After being Jesus with Jesus for 3 years, their world was turned upside down from the teachings they heard and saw from Jesus. Throughout Jesus' ministry, only one request was made from the disciples. That was "*Teach us how to pray*" (Matt 6:5) a.k.a what is the source of your (Jesus') secret?

Jesus taught His disciples that **prayer** opens our supply line to God. As we plug our life into God's life, a new spiritual life is birth. Day by day, through connecting with God and other believers in prayer, your spiritual life grows, illuminates and takes shape.

"If you want a vibrant and growing small group, consistently take time to grow in your relationship with God." page 23

As believers become shaped by God, changes begin to take place. Old thoughts are removed. New thoughts are replaced. With increasing measure, believers are being imparted with the thoughts and power of the Holy Spirit. Slowly, day by day, believers become more like Christ. Slowly we are being released from the bondage of our sinful nature. With increasing measure, character changes and as character changes, habits change. Moment by moment your capacity to live the new life in Christ grows.

Instead of saying: "*We are just too comfortable. We don't want to change. We like being the way we are.*" Instead

through the power of prayer, your thinking will begin to shift by saying "*We are on a mission for God, We are undergoing training. We are making disciples*". The authors make it clear that the effectiveness of any small group can only happen by undergoing and aligning three internal dynamics that are foremost and essential for growth:

- **Conversion growth** - A truly growing small group know and understand their poverty of spirit, therefore, they come to the riverside of life as deer thirsts for water. They feel sorrow for their brokenness. They want healing and want to become whole. They never forget what has been given them: their salvation paid at a great cost.
- **Assimilation** - They are tremendously grateful. They are followers of Jesus because of what Jesus has done for them. They are in awe with the plan of God to save sinners. They pursue His salvation plan. They learn how to pray. In praying for yourself, you learn the skill of listening and communicating to a Holy God. Your prayers help you understand yourself and God. In praying for others, the capacity for caring, reaching out and empower others is enhanced. Your capacity for compassion becomes enlarged.
- **Group Multiplication** - True conversion spurs growth. In a true conversion there is desire to become a true disciple. a follower of Jesus. True conversion makes a commitment to be shaped and molded into a disciple. A true disciple then goes on to train other disciples. New groups are born.

The book is easy to read and offers many practical insightful applications. Yet the effectiveness of small groups seems harder than it sounds. That's because success hinges on the ability to connect people to God and one another in community. Giving birth to new life is not easy. As your group enters into the new life, you will realize you depend more and more on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Through prayer, the Holy Spirit will help you renew and manage your mind, your peace and happiness, your struggle with pain and sin. As your thoughts change, so does your character. As your character changes, so does your habits. This is your ultimate new life in the Spirit and ultimate goal in a small group.

"Letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death, but letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace" (Rm 8:6)

What is the measure of your small group? How are your thoughts and your character being shaped day by day, moment by moment, into the person that lives out God's spiritual life? What steps will you take in order for your small group to bring about the big impact that reflects God's glory? ■

For questions comments: ejquan02@gmail.com.

Proximate | Prox•i•mate | Close; Very Near

Article By: Cynthia Chinn. Photos By: Gary Gin



L-R: Ranelle Calub, (Clinic Manager), Chastidy Ronan, (former Executive Director) & Faith Wirajsilp (Executive Director).

This year's annual banquet for Alpha Pregnancy Center (APC) is titled Proximate. This is the heartbeat of APC--choosing to draw close/stay near to a woman when faced with an unplanned pregnancy by walking the hard path with her. What a blessed evening on March 2 to be among the 300 supporters including 53 from Sunset Church. It was both inspirational and convicting listening to these real-life Wonder Women of faith share what's on their hearts as we heard from former APC director Chastidy Ronan to the new director, Faith Wirajsilp, and keynote speaker, Talitha Phillips (CEO of Claris Health, a non-profit healthcare clinic in Southern California providing quality healthcare for anyone related to their pregnancy or sexual health concerns).

The golden thread throughout the evening was the life-giving power of God's love as the speakers shared about staying close, proximity, in the lives of women and men they encountered so they may know they are not alone. Chastidy spoke about loving on the women who walked through the doors of APC. Faith shared that God is pro-abundant life for the whole person, not just pro-life. Talitha spoke about her passion to move towards people (she was originally introduced to Claris Health as a client) as there is much loneliness all around us - 1 in 5 Americans suffer from persistent loneliness. The intentionality of leaning in - before, during, and after - with women faced with confusing and challenging season of an unintended pregnancy.

As I sat there listening, I was reminded of a past conversation with a young single woman. She had approached me after hearing my testimony about God is in the business of restoring and providing hope as I shared my struggle with sexual purity in my dating years. This young lady courageously shared her story of having an unexpected pregnancy and the tumultuous storm that followed. Her eyes filled with tears as she struggled with feelings of fear, shame, guilt, and regret. She had an abortion. No one knew except her boyfriend, not her family or anyone in her church small group. During the course of our conversation, I shared with her how much God loves her, He wants to draw close to her, and speak truth into her life to free her from the false beliefs she has about herself. As a believer, her identity in Christ is not defined by her past or current circumstances rather it is based on what God has done for her and the relationship He desires with her. I wanted her to know there is always hope and God is able to restore her soul. As I sat there with her, stayed in her pain, I wept too.

On a final note, APC had a fundraising goal of \$60,000 that evening, not only was it reached but it was surpassed... \$60,886! Much thanks to all the generous supporters! Immense gratitude to the staff and volunteers at APC and Claris Health for loving and caring upon countless women who experienced struggles of unexpected pregnancies and/or made the choice to be a single parent. Lastly, all the praise goes to our Heavenly Father who is able to do exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine!!



Let's Worship Together Article Series – Volume 2

Article By: Melody Gawliu



Melody spending quiet time with God in the Tennessee countryside.



Preface

“**W**hy God? Why? A year ago, I believed I heard you so clearly but was I mistaken? I need you to do it again. I need you to speak to me clearly and point me in the direction you want me to go. I believed you were telling me to go down this path and all that happens is I get pushed up against walls. These walls I’m facing, is this you telling me to turn around? If not, I need you to help break it down or get me around it.” That is the conversation I had with God leading up to my trip back to Tennessee to the Worship Together 2018 Conference. **I prayed for God to be present and to speak to me** and well, my dear sisters and brothers, when you pray that prayer, be ready because BOY will He ever show up!

The conference doesn’t tell you ahead if there’s a theme other than the fact that it is about worship to God. They reveal a few of the main worship leaders and maybe a couple of the speakers but everything else is just a wonderful surprise; **you just wait and see what God is going to say and do**. Similarly to my experience last year, I heard God speaking to me loud and clear. This time God reminded me “I am the Path. Follow me. No matter where it goes, just be faithful in following Me and remember that with every step - I am there.”

Upon reflecting on this clarity from this year and last, I had an epiphany! Perhaps the reason why I heard God speaking so clearly was because **I was listening in anticipation**. I prayed and fought to be still and was watching intently to see what God was doing and *desired* to hear what He had to say. I realized I was genuinely excited in my anticipation; I knew God was doing and saying things and *I came eagerly to observe*. **What an amazing experience this perspective was!** This is what I pray for myself now, especially when Sunday rolls around – for God to speak loudly and for me to fight against the distractions of the world to be genuinely excited and intentionally coming to hear from God. That I remember why I do what I do no matter what – to glorify God with every fiber of my being.

I hope you join me in this journey of processing the messages that God spoke during my time in Nashville through reading the next volume of my article series; messages of reassurance, affirmation, and hope. **My prayer is that you would experience God** the way He has so graciously and mercifully allowed me to time and time again. This prayer extends well beyond through reading these articles. This prayer is for you to experience God through living life attentively to Him. As you go through life, I pray you would choose to be aware of God – what He’s doing and what He’s saying – because you are genuinely excited and anticipating Him!

Sisters and brothers, **let’s worship together** in eagerness and anticipation, with this awareness of who God is and what He’s doing. Amen.

If you’re interested in reading volume 1 of this article series “Let’s Worship Together,” please feel free to e-mail me and I’ll forward them along to you. I’m also in the process of having them organized into a little booklet! I’d love to talk with you more in depth so please feel free to stop me at church or e-mail me. ■

Sunset Profile: Vern Lee

Q: Tell us a little about yourself, your family, your background and your spiritual journey.

I was born in Indio, California, near Palm Desert, but grew up in San Jose. I have an older sister and a younger brother, both of whom still live in San Jose. I attended UC Davis, where I graduated with a degree in Food Science and am currently working as the Director of Culinary Development at Revolution Foods, creating healthy and tasty meals for children, including students at SFUSD. I've been married for 18 years to my beautiful wife, Melody, and have 3 children, Ben (15), Micah (10), and Lydia (6). I accepted Christ when I was 8 years old at a neighborhood VBS but did not feel I encountered God until I was 16, when I rededicated my life to Him.

Q: What are your hobbies or interests?

Cooking, baking, traveling. Recently, I have been brewing ginger beer and dabbling in fermentation of different foods.

Q: If you can go anywhere and do anything, where would you go and do?

Eat and explore my way through Japan.

Q: What ministries are you serving in? What inspired you to serve in this role and how can others be involved?

One ministry I'm serving in is Coffee for a Cause, a monthly ministry that endeavors to raise awareness and financial support for diverse Sunset supported ministries by serving handcrafted foods and beverages with excellence. I started having conversations several years ago with Mike Chinn as he felt called to start a ministry that became Coffee for a Cause. I was encouraged by Mike's obedience to God nudging him to use his gifts for God's glory. This inspired me to use my gifts in hospitality when Mike asked me to serve God and our congregation alongside him. The CFC team is always growing and we encourage folks who are interested in serving on Sundays or cooking/baking food items to reach out to any of the Coffee for a Cause team.

Q: How do you see God working in your life?

God continues to be faithful to us in all aspects of our lives. In our current season, Melody and I are challenged to model God's love for us to our children and to have faith that God is in control of all things. We've been given the privilege and responsibility to love and raise our kids, which we cannot perfectly achieve, but we know God is ultimately in control. We get to join Him in this endeavor.

Q: What is something that people would be surprised to know about you?

I enjoy washing dishes. Of course it's because I've made a huge mess in the kitchen, but there is something therapeutic and refreshing about the process of washing and rinsing that puts me at ease.

Q: What Bible verse has been the most impactful to you in your Christian Journey? Why?

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."
- Ephesians 2:8-10

I am a doer and this passage reminds me that no matter how hard I work or strive to be or do good, I cannot save myself. My salvation is God's gift to me. I cannot earn it. I cannot work for it. It is freely given. God did this because He loves me and purposefully designed and created me as His workmanship to be used by Him. That is so awesome and freeing. ■



The Lee Family. L-R: Ben, Melody, Lydia, Vern, Micah