

# MATTHEW

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## *Inside Terry's Office:*

### *The Book of Matthew - Working Through Our Pre-conceived Notions*

“The prophecies concerning the coming Messiah can't all be true, they contradict each other,” the Hebrews must have said to each other. For instance, how could the Messiah be “called a Nazarene”, “come out of Egypt”, and be “a ruler from Bethlehem”? You can understand how ‘schools’ of interpretation could develop that may value one prophecy over another in order to help them make sense to the interpreters.

Then, Matthew tells the convoluted real life story (truth is stranger than fiction) and **all** the prophecies come together in Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, fleeing to Egypt for safety, and returning to Israel to grow up in Nazareth. In the same manner that Sherlock Holmes' fantastic insights make perfect sense once he explains his observations, so the prophecies make sense once they have been fulfilled. Until that time, they seem contradictory or fantastic. Afterwards, they are seen as the very stuff of real life and true happenings. And, for the most part, that is how our lives go; we can't understand the hows and whys of God's actions and/or inactions in our lives until we look back on them after having experienced God's plan. Meanwhile, we walk by faith!

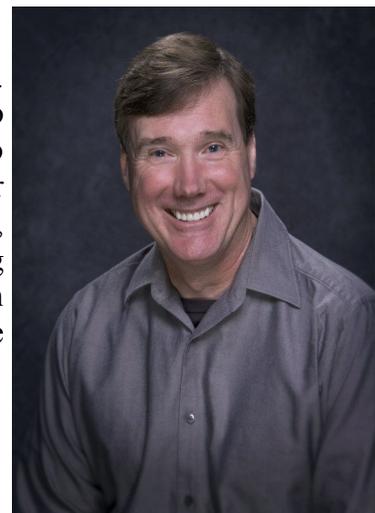
This pattern holds true for those who come to us for counseling. When we begin teaching healthy relational patterns, we are asking them to trust us. Even when they come to us looking for help (like the Hebrews were looking for a Messiah), they still have ideas of what that help is supposed to be like. Often, what we call ‘healthy’ is counterintuitive and even risky for them. It is understandable that a client wants help in changing others rather than themselves because their way of relating makes sense to them. Their emotional, relational, and/or spiritual patterns have evolved naturally over their lifetime and have served them well in many ways. Usually, they have tried very hard to make things work in the relationships they value most; their ‘failure’ has not been due to a lack of effort.

Asking a client to trust that the help we have to offer is good, even when at times they can't really understand what we are asking of them, is asking a lot of them. It takes a lot of humility, perseverance, and trust to begin and/or continue in counseling. They have to walk by faith!

I am not claiming ‘Messiah status’ for the counsel we offer. I'm recognizing how God works and what it takes in all of us to follow Him. I'm also claiming hope for us all! Just as those who were looking forward to the incarnation had to work through their pre-conceived notions to embrace the convoluted real life events, those of us looking for our personal incarnation (the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit) have to work through our pre-conceived notions to embrace our convoluted real life transformations.

We walk by faith!

In His Grip, TWE



*Matthew: Embracing  
The Struggle*

Good News!! Jesus Christ is Born, the Savior of the World! Where does one begin with the Gospel of Matthew? It is the first of the Good News Gospels that describe the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew **continues the story of the relentless and holy love of God**, the Father we have been reading about in the previous thirty-nine letters. Crabb relates this message from God in this fortieth letter,

*The center of the good news is that you can know My Son and by My Spirit enter into the relationship My Son and I enjoy. . . you are now empowered to serve My kingdom, to relate as We relate within the Trinity.* (66 Love Letters, Larry Crabb)

Now the Father/Son relationship that was enjoyed in heaven was now offered for us to enjoy on earth. I love that statement, **you are now empowered to serve**, which is another theme that we see continued into the New Testament. As a matter of fact, we see that empowering displayed right off in principle characters to which we are introduced in the early chapters of Matthew. Most are ordinary people filled with and led by the Spirit called into extraordinary circumstances. It is this theme that inspires my ponderings today.

I see it day in and day out with my counselees, the seemingly endless struggle. The first week back after

the Christmas break I entered into conversations describing the very real and personal struggles. In those conversations we talked about “embracing the struggle.” (I know this sounds very counselor-esque!) So often, however, we try to make the struggle not true. For instance, a young mom of a toddler may want counsel on how to stop or control a certain behavior. When in reality the struggle is a common trial among toddlers and mothers of toddlers. What if we put ((hugs)) around the struggle and let it be true and trust that God has equipped you with everything you need to BE just what this toddler needs, consistency, nurture and structure.

On a heavier note, what if the struggle is the reality of a life threatening disease; a marriage where the two have hit a wall of painful differences; financial crisis and fear of the future; parents of a child from trauma whom you fear will never thrive? The struggle is real, and there is no amount of maneuvering that will make the struggle go away. We are reminded again in Matthew that many who are called start out asking, “You want me to do what?” Jesus would give this affirmation of truth in the gospel of Matthew (19:26), “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!”

As I have listened to the stories of our courageous souls, I feel compelled to remind them of the empowering of the Spirit of God to work in their unique stories to accomplish all that is set before them. After one of our sessions on a day that we talked about “embracing the struggle,” the

counselee sent me this message, “Did you know that God talks to us through a children’s book?” Following our time together she and her daughter had gone to the library and picked up a children’s book called **Far Flutterby by Karen Kingsbury**. She copied a page for me to read and this is what it said,

Cody [a butterfly] called to his friends, as he dipped and soared, “Have faith through the hard times, believing is more! For there in the journey and stuck in the sting, **the struggle, the struggle... ....is what gives you wings!**

~

*Carol Anne*





# Plumblines Winter Classes

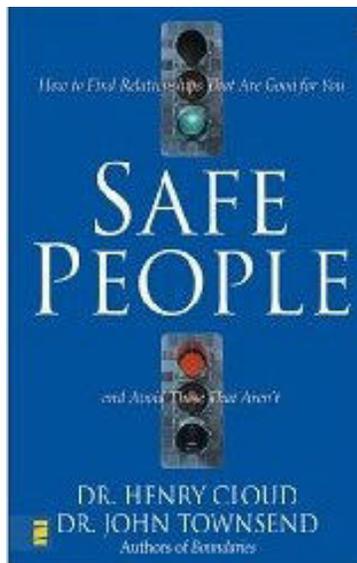
## Safe People

Facilitated by Margo Hanne

Wednesdays beginning February 22 to May 3, 2017

Cost: \$75.00 plus cost of Book

Register at our office, or at [Plumblinesonline.com](http://Plumblinesonline.com)



## Codependency Class

Sundays beginning February 26th through May 7th

Time 2:00 to 4:00 PM

Cost \$70.00 plus cost of book

You will need to purchase the *The New Codependency* by Melody Beattie either online or at your local bookstore. A manual will be provided at the first class. In addition to this book, other components will be taught in an effort to equip the student to challenge their codependent thoughts and behaviors in order to move forward in their own personal recovery. The class will be facilitated by Marion Fuller. You may sign up online at [Plumblinesonline.com](http://Plumblinesonline.com), or at the front desk.

# Stickman's Prayers

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

## stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of  
"loosing prayers"  
and the ministry of  
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter  
Terry Ewing  
Erin Garcia  
Margo Hanne  
Carolyn Knippers  
Carol McNamarra  
Sue Merrill

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

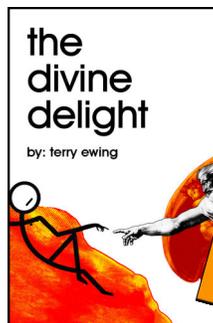
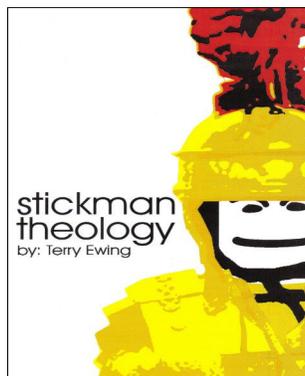
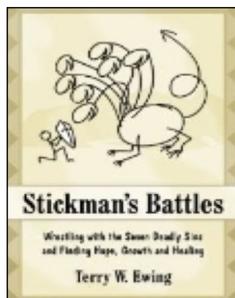
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayers* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

Available at Plumblin for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each



*Did you know you can download*

## Stickman Theology

**On your KINDLE?**

Did you know that when you shop on Amazon, you could be helping to financially support Plumblin? Through the Amazon smiles program, **Amazon will donate a portion of the sales to Plumblin.** All you need to do is go to [smiles.amazon.com](https://smiles.amazon.com), designate Plumblin Ministries, and start shopping! Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the total sales price to Plumblin. Please remember to bookmark that page and you can help us as you shop!

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