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April 2016

# Amos

## Inside Terry's Office: The Book of Amos

### Unrelenting Destruction

I'm counseling with a man who is a drug addict. He has been through rehab programs four times (a month each time). He has signed over to his wife all rights to their business, their home, and their possessions. He can only see his children when supervised and after he has passed a drug test; therefore, he does not see his children. Recently, he physically assaulted his wife and oldest children while under the influence. Before leaving for his latest rehab program he tried to turn his children against his wife with baseless accusations.

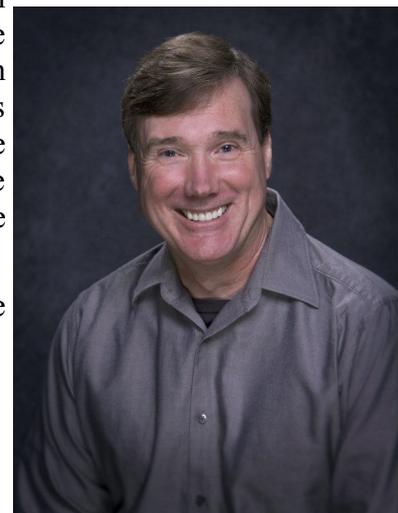
In Amos the Lord declares that he constructed Israel as a level wall, using a plumb line, to securely establish them. But, they rejected His blessings and became as bad, or worse, than the nations they had conquered while claiming the promised land. Israel has practiced idolatry, killed children in their mother's wombs, killed women in their battles, practiced injustice toward the poor, and become slave traders. They have ignored the lesser consequences the Lord has allowed to plague them. Therefore, the Lord will utterly destroy them, leaving only a remnant too small to ever be a nation again. Even so, He offers a promise to the remnant. Indeed, they will become a blessed nation once again. Whereas, every other nation that has suffered the consequences for their sin has been wiped out entirely, the Lord will maintain His remnant and bless them.

The same is true for this man whose life has been utterly destroyed by his addiction. If he is able to see the grace that God (and his wife) offer by hoping that he will someday be worthy of trust, he may yet be restored to sanity, family, and abundant life. If he is unable to accept the hope for his redemption as a grace that he does not deserve, then his sense of victimization will continue to empower his addictions. Meanwhile, his wife must be strong enough to say (as our Lord said to Israel), *"For three sins, even for four, I will not relent!"*

You see, up until now, the man's wife and mom have relented from enforcing the consequences the man's actions demand. In order to limit the pain these consequences would bring on him and them, they have worked hard at "helping him start again" after each failure. Now, the wife is willing to leave him to his own resources. He won't be allowed to depend on her in any way. He must be willing to face the wreckage he has made of his life. If he is willing to do so **EVENTUALLY** he will be given, by God, a remnant of the life he once knew. If he accepts that remnant with gratitude, God can bless it and provide him a more blessed life than he ever knew.

There is a narrow way, and few are those who find it. Please pray for him!

In His Grip, TWE



ESTABLISHING A PLUMBLINE IN THE HEART OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The Plumbline

## “The Plumbline”

From Love Letter 30: Amos:

**God:** “I comfort only the broken. I stand against the proud. The unrepentant I will destroy. The **plumb line is dropped** [7:7-9]. Your crookedness is exposed. You and everyone else are ripe for judgment [8:1-3].”

**Crabb:** “God, what crookedness? What are You saying?”

**God:** “**When you remain blind to your guilt, you seek Me (if you seek Me at all) for your purposes.** And you call it church. But your gatherings are a club of self-seekers. I despise your religious gatherings. I cannot stand your assemblies [Amos 5:21, “*I hate—I totally reject—your religious ceremonies and have nothing to do with your solemn gatherings.*” (The Voice)].”

Amos did not consider himself a “professional prophet.” He, like so many of God’s vessels was from humble means. He worked the land and tended sheep in “peaceful Tekoa, a pastoral village of Judah.” (\*The Voice introduction to Amos) And then God called Amos to be his voice during the reign of King Jeroboam II. The message was delivered to an “idolatrous and indulgent people” who included Israel’s neighbors who were violent and unjust but also God’s own people for rejecting the teaching and will of God. Another helpful

understanding about the message deliverer, Amos, is that his prophesies “emerge from a phenomenon known as second sight—the prophet sees something rather ordinary, such as, a locust or **plumb line** or a basket of ripe fruit” and receives an extraordinary message from God.”\*

During our Monday morning meeting one of our interns noted that in every reading he had had that morning the message was consistent to step out of his comfort zone. This struck a chord with me as just the day before our pastor gave a message titled, “The Jesus Who Calls You to Stop Playing it Safe.” He noted that in our culture we have an “idol of safety” and that that idol is destroying our faith.

In order to answer the call of God, Amos had to step out of his peaceful and safe surroundings to deliver an unpleasant message to a prideful people--people who had found security in their religious practices and ceremonies. At Plumbline Ministries as ordained pastoral counselors we commit to respond to a call to **establish a Plumb Line in the hearts of God’s people.** That means we take a risk to step on some toes in order to help folks own their part in their dysfunction or it means meeting people in the midst of a pain we have never experienced. I remember in the early days of counseling how inadequate I felt to provide words of comfort and challenge --wanting only for people to leave my office feeling encouraged --- that was my comfort zone. I am so thankful that I got to sit in with Terry and observe what

appeared to be his comfort with long pauses in conversation. He didn’t jump to fill in the awkward empty spaces. When he did speak, however, he asked more questions than he stated opinions. When he gave a word of encouragement it was more about spurring the person on toward a healthy decision.

Here’s the deal—when we stay within our comfort zone (our idol of safety) we miss the experience of God being strong through our weakness or inadequacy. We miss what the faith walk is all about. One last thought I just have to say: Why be so afraid to admit your brokenness or to embrace God’s plumb line? So many of us use our rituals to make us feel better or safe to ensure that we stay in God’s favor so that no ill will befalls us. Face it with me that I AM (You are) A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE!! God’s plumb line lets me see my sin that I may embrace it because it is in that acknowledgement that I experience God’s amazing grace.



## Lessons from Amos: Persevering In Difficulty

“Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel: ‘Amos is hatching a plot against you right here on your very doorstep! What he is saying is intolerable. He is saying, “Jeroboam will soon be killed, and the people of Israel will be sent away into exile.” Then Amaziah sent orders to Amos: ‘Get out of here, you prophet! Go on back to the land of Judah, and earn your living by prophesying there! Don’t bother us with your prophecies here in Bethel. This is the king’s sanctuary and the national place of worship!’ But Amos replied, ‘I’m not a professional prophet, and I was never trained to be one. I’m just a shepherd, and I take care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord called me away from my flock and told me, “Go and prophesy to my people in Israel.” Now then, listen to this message from the Lord: “You say, ‘Don’t prophesy against Israel. Stop preaching against my people.’ But this is what the Lord says: ‘Your wife will become a prostitute in this city, and your sons and daughters will be killed. Your land will be divided up, and you yourself will die in a foreign land. And the people of Israel will certainly become captives in exile far from their homeland.’” Amos 7:10-17 NLT

What a daunting thing for Amos! He was just a shepherd, minding his own business, tending his stuff when God tapped him on the shoulder. Oh man! I’m shuddering to think of what that must have felt like. I think it took a lot of courage and trust in God for Amos to go to the king and face what he faced. The king said....get out of here you prophet! Ha!

How about you? Has the Lord asked something of you and, in obeying, you felt accused, judged, rejected, opposed, or intimidated by others? I think Amos might have felt that way too. It seems to me that that is part of the human condition. If we live on this earth, we get to experience these things from time to time.

In ministry with others, we say, “It gets worse before it gets better,” and, “You’re becoming healthy enough to be sick.” We (myself included) come to counseling with a host of dysfunctions, unhealthy coping patterns, and heresies believed (twisting of truth). As we journey toward health, we start identifying and shining the light on things, embracing where we are, confronting things, and “becoming healthy enough to be sick.”

Then, with God’s help, we begin the process of change. We learn to accept and like ourselves. We learn about codependency, what safe people look like, and how to set healthy boundaries. What we are often not aware of is...we are part of a family system that’s been in place for a very long time. When we change one part of that family system the other parts of the system are challenged. We are entering into new territory. Old patterns are changing and that can feel unloving and uncomfortable to the ones who are used to the way we were before....unhealthy as it was. We are confronting the unhealthy and embracing the healthy. We can receive opposition from those resistant to the changes. It can be a bumpy ride...”it gets worse before it gets better.”

So, how do we persevere in the midst of the bumpy ride? We can examine our 51% (what do God and I think?), cling to His armor, and cling to His commitment to us. He is far more invested in our journey to health than we are, He is working behind the scenes in ways we can’t see, and He will never leave our sides. God help us to persevere, courageously...believing that You’re with us and You’ve got this. Whatever “this” happens to be.

Lets trust Him together. “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23 NIV

Struggling, striving, and growing,  
Michelle Elliott



# Soul Care Training

## Soul Care Training V– Unit 6 “This is your Brain on Prayer” Thursday 6:30 -8:30 p.m. May 12, 2016-July 28, 2016

This semester of Soul Care Training will be devoted to **understanding the development and functioning of the brain and how our prayers affect our brain functioning**. We will explore therapeutic options of healing the brain and connecting with God. We will discuss and practice praying together as fellow children in relationship with Father God, as intercessors, and as spiritual warriors. We will discuss and practice prayers of blessing, binding, loosing, and spiritual warfare among others. In each case, we will be referencing our Joyful Identity or lack thereof.

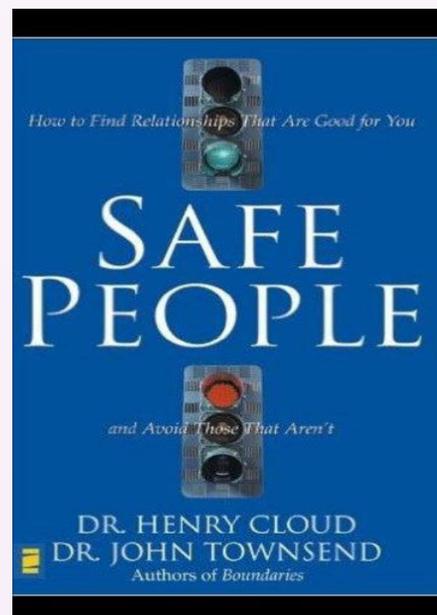
We will ask each student to read “**This is your Brain on Joy**” by Dr. Earl Henslin, and “**Stickman’s Prayers**” published by Plumblin. We will also **ask each student to prepare a 10 minute teaching on a means of “returning to joy” that has blessed them.**

- May 12<sup>th</sup> - Joy Bonds
- May 19<sup>th</sup> - Fear Bonds
- May 26<sup>th</sup> - Maladaptive Schemas
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> - Healing Codes; Algorithms and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
- June 9<sup>th</sup> - Return to Joy and Identity Change
- June 16<sup>th</sup> - Student presentations / Loosing prayers
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> - Student presentations / Blessing prayers
- June 30<sup>th</sup> - Book Reviews
- July 7<sup>th</sup> - James Wilder’s “Process for resolving trauma”
- July 14<sup>th</sup> - Ed Smith’s “Moving beyond Belief and Choice Barriers”
- July 21<sup>st</sup> - Exploratory Prayer
- July 28<sup>th</sup> - Exploratory Prayer

**Sign Up Online @ [www.plumblinonline.com](http://www.plumblinonline.com) Or In The Office  
\$50.00 Deposit Due By April 28 and \$200 Balance Due By May 12**

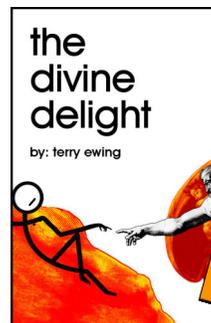
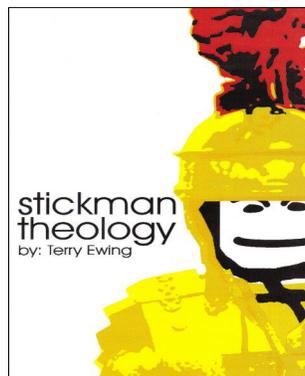
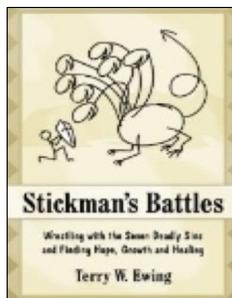
## SAFE PEOPLE CLASS

**June 7 - August 9**  
**Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**  
**Cost: \$70.00 plus Book Safe People**  
**by Cloud and Townsend**  
  
**Taught by Margo Hanne**



| <b>Financial Snapshot</b>            | <b>February 2016</b> | <b>Year-to-Date 2016</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Average Hours Serving Clients</b> | 339                  | 690                      |
| <b>Contribution Income</b>           | \$11,580             | \$19,649                 |
| <b>Operations Expenditures</b>       | \$11,621             | \$21,464                 |
| <b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>             | (\$41)               | (\$1,815)                |

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