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Winter 2020

Casting Down Imaginations

Camz Counsel

"The Horse is Not in the Stable"

One of the stories we have come to love and have passed along many times in the counseling office is an old Portuguese story as retold in Linda Dillow's book *Calm My Anxious Heart*. The story is about an old man who was very poor but had one very prized possession according to all the villagers, a white stallion. There are a series of events that happen with this stallion with one thing leading to another. While the villagers would insist on calling one event or another a blessing or a curse, the old man would repeat this message;

*"How do you know if this is a blessing or not? You see only a fragment. Unless you know the whole story, how can you judge? If you read only one page, how can you judge the whole book? All you have is a fragment? Don't say that this is a blessing [or a curse]. No one knows. **I am content with what I know. I am not perturbed by what I don't know.**"*

One of the verses I love to quote that I think best addresses placing judgments on circumstances is from The King James Bible, 2 Corinthians 10:5,

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And I love how *The Passion Translation* captures the true essence of the meaning of this scripture,

"We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God and break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One."

The word that I have been contemplating this week is *ambivalent*, "having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone." It is within this ambivalence that lays a perfect storm for vain imaginations or engaging in self-vindicating fantasies. In the previously mentioned story about the Old Portuguese farmer and his prize stallion, the old man had been challenged by his well meaning neighbors that since he was very poor he would be a fool to not sell his prized stallion. One day the horse was missing from the stable and the villagers whined, Old man this is a curse! Their imaginations took them down a road of destruction and doom but **the old man stayed grounded in the only thing he knew, that *the horse was not in the stable.***

Continue Camz Counsel

Winter 2020

The possible ambivalence represented in this tale is on the one hand the old man owned a valuable white stallion that the villagers insisted could be sold for a lot of money but on the other, we have a white stallion that is like family to the old man and therefore, priceless to him; two true statements. Ambivalence left to its own recourse, however, will insist on a rationale that satisfies both sides and that only one side can be true and therefore win. This leads us down a trail of other conflicting thoughts and judgments. If the old man had given in to this pull, he may have questioned himself thinking, “maybe I am a fool” or “what if I am a fool?” He might have felt critical toward the villagers for “making me feel like a fool”. The old man had peace with his decision to maintain his conviction that the horse was like a family member and could not be sold even in the face of the horse’s disappearance from the stable. He did not judge the disappearance as his having made a huge mistake but rather simply, the horse was not in the stable and that all he had was a fragment of the story.

Vain imaginations (aka, deceptive fantasies) lead us down an endless wandering path of undue pain. The temptation of having two true statements that oppose each other is a common trial that I meet in the counseling office. It is not until we can embrace the reality of the two opposing thoughts that we can experience the grace of God for the struggle that will likely ensue. It is often our need to avoid the struggle that propels us into vain imaginations.

The old man said, “I am content with what I know. I am not perturbed by what I don’t know.” He captured his thoughts. We can also have contentment by bringing our wayward thoughts into submission of the knowledge of God where he says he will be with us in the struggle.

Carol Anne

***Inside Terry's Office:
Casting Down Imaginations
Billy Graham and the Widow with Two Mites!***

I am excited to address with you what I call “The Fantasy of Effectiveness”. When “casting down imaginations” I think the fantasy of effectiveness may be the most beloved heresy of our Christian Culture.

I have experienced the temptation to claim effectiveness on behalf of Plumline so many times. People want to know that they are supporting a ministry that has “impact for the kingdom”. We get asked questions by potential sponsors about our “success rate” and the number of testimonies we generate. And, although I love testimonies as much as anyone, I recognize the challenge to prove our effectiveness. This can put me in a quandary that I call “the begging, bragging, dog and pony show”.

This is a problem for me because I don't believe that we can measure our impact (or lack thereof) based upon numbers. In my book *The Divine Delight* I make an argument that often the most impactful actions we take for the sake of can be compared to knocking over a domino as we walk, without even knowing we did it, that falls into a series of other dominos that keep falling into eternity.

We fall into the fallacy of misvaluing the widow's mites when we point to the bigger or faster growing ministries as being most “effective”. Meanwhile, ... Jesus saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins and claimed that her gift had “touched upon more “ than all the gifts of others that day. When you read the verses in Mark or Luke, our translations sound as if Jesus simply pointed out that the widow's gift was PROPORTIONALLY bigger (as if we needed Jesus to tell us that). Actually, Jesus was claiming something much more profound - He is claiming that her gift accomplishes more in the kingdom than the much larger gifts that others were giving.

We might wonder how that could possibly be. If others had not given their much larger gifts there wouldn't have even been a place for her to give her two mites to. Yet, Jesus is referring to a truth that turns our perceptions upside down. In the spiritual realms the least shall be most and the last shall be first (and other such oxymoronic thoughts)!

Billy Graham is sometimes used as the example of how, by staying true to his theology, his morals, and his mission, he was THEREFORE more effective for the kingdom than the common Christian. But, as wonderful as I think Billy Graham was, I want to challenge that narrative. Although I could site all kinds of numbers that lead us to believe HE (or his ministry) was more effective than the average, I believe that is something we just can't really know. We can appreciate him. We can give testimonies as to what God did in the midst of his revivals. BUT we can't say that what he did was more impactful for the kingdom than the widow who gave her two mites.

Sooooo, I want you to know that what you do (even when you kick over a domino without knowing it) is precious and powerful within the kingdom! We must not be arrogant by claiming an “effectiveness” that we have no way of really measuring. And, we can't dismiss the importance of who we are and what we do simply by believing in Jesus and following Him as best we can!

In His Grip, TWE

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2020 Winter Classes

Workshops—\$75.00 per person or bring a friend for \$100.00 for 2

Tools 101— January 11, 2020 (NEW) This workshop is intended for anyone who is needing counseling but cannot start yet or as a jumpstart to counseling. It is also intended for those who want relational tips and tools as well as former graduates of Plumblin as a refresher course.

Is This Love—February 8, 2020 (NEW)

Trust Building—December 14, 2019 and March 8, 2020

Details: This workshop is intended for anyone who has experienced the pain of lost trust and wants to find help in learning how to trust again. IT is also intended for those who have broken the trust of another and want to learn how to make amends. You may just want to learn how to deepen our capacity to trust. This is for you too!

All workshops begin at 8:30 and go until 2:30 with registration at 8:00 A.M.

New! Seminars \$100 per Participant

Stickman Saturday Seminar—Marriage “How to Enjoy your Spouse!”

Saturday, January 18, 2020 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Details: God offers Himself as an active 3rd part in your marriage. When we depend on Him. His role helps move us from the performance-based model you may have been aught to the mercy-based model that facilitates your enjoyment of Him, yourself, and ***your spouse!***

Stickman Saturday Seminar—Parenting: How to Enjoy your Children!”

Saturday February 15, 2020 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

We will examine an alternative to this fear creating performance-based parenting principles you may have been taught. The mercy-based parenting principles will free you to be yourself and enjoy yourself ***more with those you love so dearly.***

Soul Care

January 16– April 2020

Soul Care Training VII—Unit 5

Diagnostic Categories

Cost: \$250 Onsite—\$100 Online. \$50 deposit due Tuesday, December 17, 2019.

Details: After a few weeks focused on spiritual warfare as a common trial of life, there will be weekly exploration of the various diagnostic categories that affect individuals and their families. The course will end with student presentations on various topics.

Plan Ahead!

Soul Care—Summer Session

May 7– July 23, 2020 6:30 to 8:30

Soul Care Training VII—Unit 6

This is Your Brain on Prayer

Details: This unit 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. The format of this class will include instruction and experiential application.

Special Classes

All of the following classes are now \$90.00

Boundaries: Stickman Style—Tuesdays—January 28, 2020 to March 31, 202 6:30 to 8:30 P.M.

Details: Why do I say yes when I want to say no? Do I feel controlled by others? Do I feel a need to control others? Get help with questions like these and many more by learning about Boundaries!

Safe People: Stickman Style—Monday January 27, 2020—Mach 30, 2020 6:30 to 8:30 P.M.

Details: Learn how to identify the nurturing people we need and want in our lives as well as how to be that person for those in our lives!

Codependency: Stickman Style—Sunday, January 26, 2020—March 29, 2020 2P.M. to 4:P.M.

Details: When good behavior s are taken to far or when I need you to be okay for me to be okay, you may need the skills taught in the codependency class.

Stickman's Prayers

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

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

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?

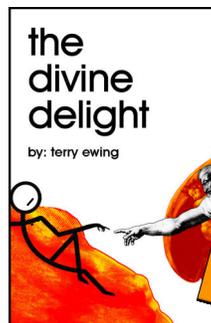
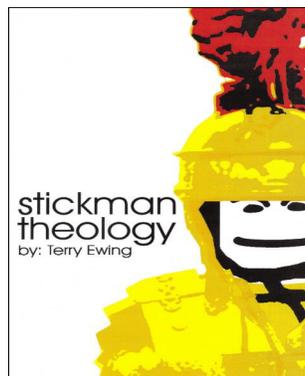
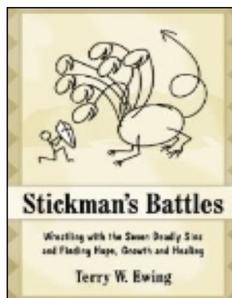
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

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, 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!

PLUMBLINE

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