



FOCUS Newsletter

a newsletter for women in difficult relationships, feeling emotionally and spiritually alone

November 2005
Volume 11 Issue 2

Short-sighted Vision or Eternal Perspective?

Myopia is a visual defect in which distant objects appear blurred. The root word means “closing or contracting the eyes.” Another meaning for myopia is short-sightedness or lack of discernment in thinking or planning.

Many who are struggling with difficult relationships experience spiritual myopia by focusing so long on the pain and injustice in their lives that hope has become blurred and distorted.

A diagnosis of spiritual myopia reveals side effects of bitterness, negative thinking, and loss of perspective. The blame game becomes the sport of choice as wounded people accuse others and God for the misery in their lives.

The cure for spiritual myopia is a daily dose of gratitude for what you *have* instead of focusing on what you have lost.

Columnist William H. Smith wrote, “If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit has planted a seed of gratitude in your heart. As you look at life through the eyes

of faith, you’ll see many expressions of your heavenly Father’s goodness. And as you face with faith the sometimes harsh realities of life, you’ll see that the really important things can’t be taken away. The Father’s love, the forgiveness of sins, the promise of the resurrection are blessings you can’t lose. The seed of gratitude, watered with faith, can produce a great harvest of thanksgiving in your life”

As you see more clearly through the lens of faith, you will see how God used difficult things in the past to strengthen your faith and prepare you for the future. Instead of asking why, ask God to show you the lessons He wants you to learn as a result of your struggle.

Through the lens of eternity, your moments of pain quickly pass by like a blip on a radar screen. Aren’t you glad the scripture says “And it came to *pass* . . .” instead of “And it came to *stay!*”

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5)

*Give thanks
to the Lord
for He is good!
His faithful love
endures
forever.*

1 Chronicles 16:34 NLT

In case your vision needs a little tweaking, here are a list of treasures for which you can be thankful—which can never be destroyed, stolen, or lost by foolish living:

Identity—God placed within the heart of every person the desire to be known. Many people live their entire lives being defined by other people’s opinions and labels.

“She’s the fat lady who wobbles when she walks.”

“That’s the lady who has been divorced twice already.”

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How have you been defined? Do you live on the basis of that description or does the passion of the *real you* shine through?

Your true identity comes from God and can never be diminished by your poor choices or others’ opinions.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

When you suffer from being misunderstood or unappreciated

ated, God understands your motives and celebrates your strengths and potential to become the person He had in mind when you were created.

When your longing to be known and accepted leaves you lonely and frustrated, remember that God has placed within you a desire that cannot be completely fulfilled except through Him.

You are all God says you are, and you can become all He intended you to be . . . if you take back your identity from the pockets of other people and give it back to God who created you as an image-bearer of Himself. If you need a reminder of who you are in God's sight, read Zephaniah 3:16-17 and Psalms 139:13-16.

Stop living in the shadow of someone else, and give up trying to adapt yourself to the expectations of others. God has designed you to be free, creative, unique, and valued for who *you* are.

Your legal identity can be stolen, but no one can ever take away the essence of who God created you to be. Even if you have been verbally assaulted and beaten down for years, God can restore you, renew your spirit, and breathe new life and passion into your soul.

"When God comes to bind up our broken hearts, He does more than bandage the wounds. He heals them. He does more than turn on a light. He shows you things you never dreamed of seeing. He does more than pat you on the head and tell you to run along and play. He asks you to dance."

"When God comes to rescue His beloved, there is never anything bland or routine about His coming. He comes in glory and in strength with astounding, take-your-breath-away love and devotion." (Angela Thomas, *Do You Think I'm Beautiful*)

Love—Before you become cynical or minimize this treasure as just another

cliché, wrap your mind around a quote from Max Lucado:

"You have not lived one unloved day—ever!"

If you don't *feel* loved, perhaps you have been looking for love in all the wrong places. If your source of love is other people, you will be disappointed and disillusioned. God is the only source of true, lasting, unconditional love.

"I have loved you, my people with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself. I will rebuild you . . . You will again be happy and dance merrily with tambourines." (Jeremiah 31:3-4 NLT)

If you have put life on hold because a parent or spouse has withheld love or deemed you unworthy of love, you have been duped by a lie from the enemy of your soul.

When you approach life from a loved position, it changes everything! Instead of feeling "less than" or intimidated, you can face life with confidence and courage, knowing you are not defined by the opinions of others, but by the perfect love of El Shaddai.

"Because I love Zion, because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent. I will not stop praying for her until her righteousness shines like the dawn, and her salvation blazes like a burning torch. The nations will see your righteousness. Kings will be blinded by your glory. And the Lord will give you a new name. The Lord will uphold you in His hands for all to see—a splendid crown in the hands of God. Never again will you be called the Godforsaken City or the Desolate Land. Your new name will be the City of God's Delight and the Bride of God, for the Lord delights in you and will claim you as His own. Your children will care for you with joy, O Jerusalem, just as a young man cares for his bride. Then God will rejoice over you as a bride-

groom rejoices over his bride." (Isaiah 62:1-5 NLT)

Although this was God's message to the nation of Israel, it is also His message **to you** today:

"Because I love you, _____ (insert your name), I am praying for you that you will become the woman of beauty and passion I had in mind when you were created. Instead of being called _____ or _____, your new name is _____. You are my beloved, and I take great delight in knowing you intimately."

Hope—If you place your hope in finances or social status, you may find yourself in a desperate situation when the stock market crashes or job security is lost.

If you place your hope in family (even your church family), you may find yourself disappointed, disillusioned, and misunderstood when you don't meet their expectations or when they fail to meet your needs.

Life is not fair; justice cannot always be served; and sometimes the bad guys win. But our hope does not come from this world system—it comes from God alone. When you seek God as your source of hope, you will not be disappointed.

"O Lord, you alone are my hope." (Psalm 71:5)

Eternal Life—When life is hard, and the pain of living seems unbearable, remember that you are living in a fallen world, which is just a temporary corridor to the lavish home God has created for those who receive His gift of love, Jesus Christ.

Since disease, bullets, accidents, or terrorist attacks cannot ultimately destroy you, live every day with a grateful heart for the eternal blessings and treasures God has provided for you to enjoy. By celebrating life to its fullest, you will bring glory to God who deserves all our praise!

Letters/E-Mail



Dear FOCUS,

God has helped me these past three years as I have undergone severe spiritual, emotional, verbal, and physical abuse. I would never have made it without Jesus Christ. I was dating a Christian man who loved God. He was sweet, kind, funny, and romantic. But the turmoil began two weeks after he proposed and got really worse after we married with verbal and emotional battering, and occasional physical abuse.

I don't think I can take much more. I love my husband and have seen God work in his life. Deep down, he is a great guy, but is struggling with learning to walk with God and getting rid of his porn addiction.

I don't think it is safe or healthy for a woman to be in these kinds of situations, no matter how scarce they occur. My husband can be so wonderful, but then ruin it with one instance. If things continue, I will be seeking refuge, as I am dealing with extreme emotional stress, confusion, and depression. Jesus has been my sanity, my peace, my love, my hope, and my encouragement through the most difficult time of my life.

—Email contact

Quotable Quotes

“Faith has two parts: one is patience, and the other is gratitude.”

“Life is a gift—don't trash it!”

“An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” (Ghandi)

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

“Blessed are they
who can laugh at themselves,
for they shall never cease
to be amused.”

FOCUS Support Groups

- Savannah, **GA**—Saturdays. Call Patty Jean at 912-629-4720
- Cedar Rapids, **IA**—Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Call Pat at 319-395-0021.
- Aurora, **IL**—Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Call Brenda at 630-370-0138.
- Tinley Park, **IL**—Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Call Stephanie at 708-503-4470.
- Wheaton, **IL**—1st and 3rd Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Call Joan at 630-690-0976.
- Wood Dale, **IL**—2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call Paula at 630-595-7023.
- Lexington, **KY**—Saturdays at 9 p.m. Call Leslie at 859-224-1619 (x 143).
- Madisonville, **KY**—Thursdays at 6 p.m. Call Brenda at 270-825-2423.
- Olmstead Falls, **OH**—Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Call Sally at 440-234-8430
- Knoxville, **TN**—Tuesday at 7 p.m. Call Roberta at 865-470-2820 (x226).

If you are interested in starting a support group in your area, contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023.

“Train the Trainer” weekend seminar (for support group leaders or those interested in starting a support group):

**March 31—April 2
Oakbrook Terrace, IL**

Register online at focusministries1.org or call Paula at 630-595-7023.

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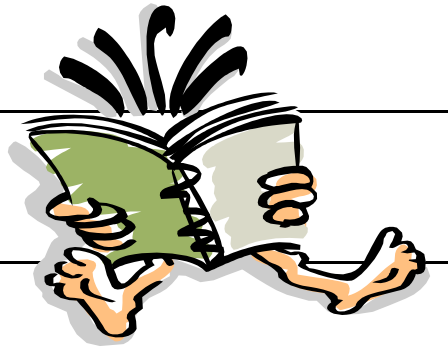
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Your Identity in Christ

Adapted from "Released From Shame" by Sandra D. Wilson, Ph.D., InterVarsity Press, 2002

John 1:12; I Peter 2: 9	You are a child of God, and you belong to Him.
Romans 8:35-39	You are loved by God, and nothing can separate you from His love.
Ephesians 1:4	You are chosen by God.
John 17:9, 12, 14	You are a gift to Jesus from God.
Romans 8:28, 30	You have been called by God.
John 17:9, Hebrews 7:25	You are in Jesus' prayers.
Ephesians 2:18; 3:12	You have access to God through Jesus.
Colossians 2:13-14	You are forgiven and your sin debt is paid.
Romans 8:1	You are not condemned.
Philippians 4:13	You are strengthened for all tasks to which God calls you.
Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6; 2:13; Psa. 139:13-16	You are God's handiwork.
I Corinthians 6:19; John 14:16	Your body is the Holy Spirit's abode.
John 6:47	You have everlasting life.
John 10:10	You have abundant life.
Romans 5:1	You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
Philippians 4:7	You have the peace of God which transcends understanding.
Colossians 1:13	You have been rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son.
Philippians 4:19	You have all your needs met according to God's glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Book Review



When Wallflowers Dance

Becoming a Woman of Righteous Confidence

by Angela Thomas

This is the book every woman needs to read! Whether you are already living life to its fullest or standing in the shadows protecting yourself from hurt and disappointment, this book will speak to the depths of your soul and help you embrace the life God intended for you.

Angela writes, “*Dancing is about being held by the lavish love of God that heals your heartaches. It’s about embracing your life’s purpose and seeing what matters for eternity. Inside the strength of His embrace, you can become the woman you have always wanted to be . . . the one He dreamed of when He dreamed of you.*”

I dare you to read this book and remain the same woman you were before you read it! Get out your dancing shoes and party dress. When your wallflower life is transformed, you’ll be moving to the rhythm of God’s passionate love.



Recipe of the Month

Cheesy Pecan Quesadillas

3 oz. Brie cheese, chopped (1/4 cup)
 2 flour tortillas (8-9")
 2 T. toasted chopped pecans or walnuts
 2 T. snipped fresh Italian parley
 Sour cream

Sprinkle cheese over half of each tortilla.
 Top with nuts and parsley.

Fold tortillas in half, pressing gently. In a lightly greased 10" skillet, cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until lightly browned.

Cut quesadillas into wedges. Serve with sour cream.

Words That Heal



Give thanks to the LORD,
 for He is good!

His faithful love endures
 forever.

Let all who fear the LORD
 repeat:

“His faithful love endures
 forever.”

In my distress I prayed to the
 LORD, and the LORD answered
 me and rescued me.

The LORD is for me, so I will
 not be afraid. What can mere
 mortals do to me?

Yes, the LORD is for me;
 He will help me.

I will look in triumph at those
 who hate me.

It is better to trust the LORD
 than to put confidence in
 people.

Psalms 118:1, 4-8 NLT

Pornography and Sexual Addiction *Part 2*

By Eileen Warren, CADC III, CCS I

Most women like to keep their surroundings clean. There are daily chores such as loading and unloading the dishwasher, sweeping the floors, making the beds, etc. Keeping up on these chores helps to maintain a neat and tidy home. A deeper cleaning needs to be done weekly or monthly such as cleaning the shower, stove, refrigerator, etc.)

Women often have routines to keep their homes looking nice. I have what my family calls the “nine o’clock sweep.” I do a sweep of the house, pick up dishes, mail, clothes, shoes, and put them away. Then I vacuum the family room and start the dishwasher.

Even with my best efforts, things can still get messy. Our two large dogs track in snow and mud; the children make peanut butter and jelly messes, and the dishwasher doesn’t get unloaded. We relate to the Bounty paper towel commercial that says, “Life is messy—clean it up!”

Relationships are messy—clean them up. Messy relationships begin in unspoken hurts and missed communications. Messy can quickly grow to “dirty.” When pornography and other sexual issues dirty up the marriage relationships, will it get swept under the rug or do you quickly get out “Mr. Clean?”

Women must become more comfortable when talking about sexual subjects such as pornography, lust, and masturbation. What you don’t know DOES hurt you, and it hurts the relationship. Looking honestly and straight forward at these issues can be uncomfortable and put each other on the defensive. Honest discussions lead to honest answers like, “Of course I masturbate—we haven’t had sex in two weeks!” The blame/excuse game is kicked into gear and no one takes responsibility for change.

There is also a growing trend to have men deal with their sexual issues in a men’s group. While these groups are good and often very helpful, it should not take the place of intimate communication in the marriage.

To the extent we are willing to put our lives and marriages under the umbrella of holiness, marriage will be characterized by sanctification, satisfaction, and gratification. Conversely, to the extent we are willing to compromise toward sin, the marriage will be characterized by injury, insult, and abuse. The Bible compares marriage to our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The goal of that relationship is to become holy. Holiness is tough and requires honest appraisal of your spiritual life. Holiness in marriage should be a normal outflow of holiness in your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Consider establishing some of the following marriage covenants:

1. Contract with each other to become aware of where, when and how lust and sexual sin enters the marriage (everyone has specific areas to work on). The where and when may require tough choices/changes in the TV, movies, and places you go. It is not only the man’s responsibility to divert his eyes—sexual purity is a shared responsibility! Get proactive instead of reactive.
2. Contract to talk (ask questions) regularly to each other about your sexual life. It is vital to ask direct and honest questions of your spouse to get to the heart of your sexual needs, sexual attitudes, and sexual habits. Avoiding the subject of your sexuality is like ignoring the laundry—it starts piling up. Ignoring sexual issues leaves both partners to assume every-

thing is okay, and/or the other partner just doesn’t care. Ask questions like “John, I’ve been noticing that we haven’t been as intimate as usual. Is something going on?” (or) “John, your lovemaking has seemed unusually intense and aggressive. I think we need to talk.” Men need to talk to their wives about their sexual needs. Wives must communicate interest and desire to meet these needs if there is to be a healthy intimate relationship.

3. Contract to confess sin to one another in order to build honesty and trust. Sharing the struggles builds intimacy. It does **not** lead to more shame and guilt. Couples must take on sexual purity in marriage as a shared responsibility.
4. Contract to get help when you feel issues are too big to handle.



In Part 3, we will look at sexual addictions—signs and symptoms—and what to do when sexual impurity is discovered. We will discuss cures and treatments, how to decide if help is needed, and where/how to find it.



Partners In Ministry

- YES! I would like to receive FOCUS Newsletter each month for 1 year at the rate of \$15 per year.
- I want to partner with FOCUS to educate churches and individuals about domestic violence and help families suffering from the trauma of abuse. Here is my faith promise of \$ _____ per month as God provides. Here is my one-time donation of \$ _____ to use where most needed.
- I want to support FOCUS Women's Centers and Homes of Refuge and provide salaries for staff. Here is my donation of \$ _____ or my monthly pledge of \$ _____.
- Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____ to provide complimentary copies of FOCUS Newsletter to women and organizations who cannot afford a subscription.
- Count on me to be a prayer warrior for this ministry. Please send me specific requests.

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City, State, Zip

Mail to FOCUS, P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413

Future Events

2006

- **March 24-26**—"Know the Hope" Women's Retreat in Dav-
enport, IA. Keynote speaker:
Carol Kent (BB & PS will pre-
sent two workshops). Contact
Linda Hall at 563-332-4692 to
register.
- **March 31-April 2**—"Train the
Trainer" weekend seminar (for
support group leaders and others
interested in helping victims of
domestic violence) in Oakbrook
Terrace, IL. Contact Paula Silva
at 630-595-7023 to register, or
register online at
www.focusministries1.org.
- **April 22**—"Restoring the
Hope" Conference for Women,
Hanson, KY. Keynote speaker:
Rachael Crabb. Contact Brenda
Branson at 270-825-2423 to
register, or register online at
www.focusministries1.org.
- **May ??**—"A Woman's Journey
to God" weekend retreat
(location to be determined) led by
FOCUS staff.
- **July 10-19**—Trip to Colorado
Springs (**School of Spiritual
Direction**) for Jenny, Paula, and
Brenda.
- **August 10-12**—**Leadership
Summit** at Willow Creek, Bar-
rington, IL for FOCUS Board
Members.
- **Sept. 9**—"Restoring the Hope"
Conference for Women, Villa
Park, IL. Keynote speaker:
Rachael Crabb. Contact Paula
Silva at 630-595-7023 to register,
or register online at
www.focusministries1.org.
- **Oct. 10-17**—**AACC Conference**
in Denver, CO (tentative)

10th Anniversary Celebration!!

Watch for information on our website
about a 2006 celebration fundraiser in
the Chicago area to celebrate 10 years
of ministry!

**If you would like the FOCUS team
to come to your church for a semi-
nar, women's retreat, or other
speaking engagement, please con-
tact us as soon as possible as our
calendar for 2006 is quickly filling
up!**

**Contact Brenda at 270-825-2423 or
Paula at 630-595-7023.**



FOCUS Ministries, Inc.
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 Hanson, KY 42413

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 630-595-7023 IL
Focusministries1.org

Our mission is to encourage women who are struggling in difficult circumstances to find strength and hope in Jesus Christ. “O Lord, you alone are my hope.” Psalm 71:5 NLT

Endorsement:

“These women are called, prepared, and surrendered to their crucial ministry. The stamp of God is on their lives and work. It’s my prayer that God will use their gifts across the world to draw thousands of women to the hope that Christ provides. This is one ministry I’m sold on.” **Dr. Larry Crabb**, New Way Ministries

Funding:

FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization funded by contributions and grants. If you would like to help us minister to hurting women through the distribution of printed materials, support groups, workshops, transitional housing, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413. A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for all contributions.

Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

Urgent Needs:

- **Finances** are at a critical low!
- New **furnace and air conditioner** at KY Women’s Center
- **Replacement windows** at KY Women’s Center
- **Gravel** for driveway at KY Women’s Center
- New **copy machine** for IL Women’s Center
- **Facility** in western suburbs of Chicago to house IL Women’s Center
- Professional **grant writer**

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for individuals, churches, and businesses to commit to **monthly giving**.
- Pray for **Sylva Neubauer** and the startup of a FOCUS branch office and support group in St. Louis, Missouri.
- Pray for funding to purchase **school building** in Madisonville, KY (\$50,000) for expanded women’s center and transitional housing.
- Pray for God to send **people** alongside us who have expertise in

development, fundraising, public relations, and grant writing.

- Pray for **property** near Elmhurst, IL to be donated for IL Women’s Center and transitional housing.
- Pray for **funding** to send Paula, Brenda, and Jenny to Advanced School of Spiritual Direction in Colorado Springs (July 2006).
- Pray for **property** to be donated for FOCUS Women’s Retreat Center.
- Pray for **houses** in IL, KY, and MO to be

donated for use as transitional homes.

- Pray for funding to provide **scholarships** for women to attend our weekend retreat, “A Woman’s Journey to God,” and our “Train the Trainer” seminar for support group leaders.
- Pray for more **invitations** from churches to train pastors, staff, and congregations about domestic violence.

O Lord, You Alone Are My Hope! Psalm 71:5 NLT